WORLDWIDE PERSECUTION OF JEWS

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BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

FEBRUARY 27, 1996

Printed for the use of the Committee on International Relations

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WORLDWIDE PERSECUTION OF JEWS

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1996

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:07 p.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, Hon. Christopher H. Smith (chairman of the subcommittee), presiding.

Mr. SMITH. The subcommittee will come to order. Today, the subcommittee will hear expert testimony on the persecution of Jews around the world. Our witnesses today will testify about the continued survival—as we face the turn of the century and celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the war that ended the Holocaust—of systematic and severe mistreatment of Jews, simply because they are Jews.

The Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights has held hearings on the persecution of religious and ethnic minorities. Only 2 weeks ago we held a hearing on worldwide persecution of Christians. That we turn today to the continuing persecution of Jews is particularly appropriate in light of recent events. The fire bombing of a bus in Jerusalem the day before yesterday, which killed 25 innocent people, including one from New Jersey, shows that there is literally nowhere in the world where Jews are safe from hatred and violence. But the worst problems appear to be in places that have a history of anti-Semitism combined with an unstable present and an uncertain future.

Our witnesses today—including academic experts, a parliamentarian, and several people who are themselves refugees from persecution—will tell us primarily about the situation in the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. We will also hear accounts of persecution in Iran and Syria. These are certainly among the worst cases, but it is important to remember that anti-Semitism and the violence it brings in its wake are not confined to one or two regions of the world. The evidence is unfortunately all around us: the bombing of a synagogue in Argentina, the "skinhead" movement in Western Europe, resurgent ethnic politics in Central and Eastern Europe, and the desecration of a small Jewish cemetery by the dictatorship that rules Burma.

The situation of Jews in the former Soviet Union is particularly important, not only because the struggle for the freedom of Soviet Jewry was among the finest hours of the American people, but also because the story could still have a bad ending. There has been a

tendency in recent years, even among those of us who have fought long and hard for the rescue of Soviet Jews, to feel that we can now relax. Unfortunately, the free world has a long history of relaxing too soon. In the case of Jews living in the former Soviet Union, what we must avoid is slamming the door too soon. It is true that in the Twentieth Century totalitarian states based on ideologies that are anti-God and anti-human being—such as nazism and communism—may have had a capacity to do evil whose scope and degree was unique in all human history. Evil, however, takes many forms and respects no boundaries. The year in which Zhirinovsky begins his campaign for President is not the year in which we should decide that the coast is clear for Russian Jews.

This hearing will also help us to assess the performance of our government, and of the international institutions such as the U.N. Commissioner for Refugees, in responding to the pleas of Jewish communities that are at risk around the world. Our government had to be prodded for years before it made freedom of emigration for persecuted Soviet Jews a foreign policy priority. We all remember the good work that the Jackson-Vanik amendment did in helping to lead to the safe escape of so many from that country during those dark years. More recently, as we will hear today, our foreign policy establishment was also slow to recognize and react to the persecution of Jews in Iraq.

We must remind ourselves, and then we must remind our government, that refugee policy is not just an inconvenient branch of immigration policy. Human rights policy is not just a subset of trade policy. The protection of refugees and the fight for human rights around the world are about recognizing that good and evil really do exist in the world. They are also about recognizing that we are all brothers and sisters. If we recognize these truths, we can build a coalition to preserve and to strengthen U.S. policies designed to protect not only our witnesses today, but all who are persecuted because of their religion, because of their race, because of their nationality, or their policy beliefs, and to restore these policies to the place they deserve as a top priority in American foreign policy.

I would like to ask my very good friend and distinguished colleague, a gentleman from California, if he would like to make any opening comments.

Mr. LANTOS. I would, Mr. Chairman. I want to commend you for dealing with this issue. There is no one in Congress who has been a more persistent and effective champion for human rights, religious freedom, and against persecution than you have, and I think the holding of this hearing is just the most recent manifestation of that. I also want to express my regret that two matters—one pertaining to Louis Farrakhan and one pertaining to the bombing yesterday in Jerusalem—forces me to be absent for a later portion of this hearing.

Religious persecution globally is one of the most pervasive and tragic examples of the abuse of human rights. It is extremely important that we here in the United States make known our most serious concern with official government efforts to prevent the free exercise of religious belief. Persecution of Jews in many regards goes way beyond religious persecution. It involves racism and dis-

crimination of the most vicious and of the most revolting type. It is important that we discuss and expose to the light the religious persecution of Jews and the poison of anti-Semitism, whenever this comes from other governments as a matter of government policy, or whether it comes from private citizens acting on the basis of prejudice and bigotry.

There has been a disturbing upsurge in anti-Semitism and religious persecution of Jews across the globe in recent times. In countries with less developed democratic traditions and less well established pluralistic societies, particularly newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union, we have found anti-Semitism and religious intolerance of Jews to be an extremely serious and growing problem. We here in the United States have made religious freedom a defining trait of our national character and we have sought to fight against bigotry, anti-Semitism, and racism here at home.

At the same time, however, we continue to suffer from such problems. Anti-semitic incidents, such as the desecration of synagogues and Jewish cemeteries, are all too frequent here in the United States. And yesterday on C–SPAN, for a number of hours, those who watched could see Louis Farrakhan spew his most recent version of vicious anti-Semitism.

Unfortunately, in many cases, anti-Semitism is not limited to desecration of synagogues and cemeteries. As we witnessed in Argentina and Great Britain, in August 1994, the bombing of Jewish community centers resulted in the tragic loss of life and massive destruction of property. Even in the developed democratic countries of Western Europe, we find such incidents all too common.

It is important that political leaders speak out against anti-Semitism, bigotry, and religious intolerance. It is particularly disappointing that some prominent political leaders, both here in the United States and in Western Europe, are willing to fan the flames of intolerance when they should be encouraging mutual respect and understanding.

I hope, Mr. Chairman, our hearing today can foster this kind of mutual esteem and mutual regard for individuals with different religious beliefs and of different cultural, ethnic and racial backgrounds.

I would like to say a word, if I may, about previous hearings we held in the predecessor Subcommittee on Anti-Semitism. I welcome these hearings today as a continuing investigation by the subcommittee of this very serious human rights problem. During the 103rd Congress, as chairman of the Subcommittee on International Security, International Organizations and Human Rights, some of whose jurisdiction has been assumed by this subcommittee, as you know we held a number of hearings on the issue of anti-Semitism and the persecution of Jews.

The first of these hearings was held on June 15, 1993, and it focused on the human rights implications of the resurgence of racism and anti-Semitism. I am delighted, Mr. Chairman, that you have invited some of the same witnesses who testified at my previous hearing to testify at this hearing today. On February 9, 1994, we held another hearing on global patterns of anti-Semitism with a number of leaders of the World Jewish Congress from many dif-

ferent countries throughout the globe. On August 1, 1994, we held a hearing on international terrorism, Buenos Aires, and London. This hearing examined the series of almost simultaneous attacks against Jewish cultural and community organizations in Argentina and in the United Kingdom.

We in the United States must be clear and unequivocal in our opposition to anti-Semitism. Wherever and whenever we find such instances of anti-Semitism and religious intolerance, we must be frank and outspoken in our criticism and denunciation of these outrageous manifestations. I join you, Mr. Chairman, in condemning all types of religious persecution by any regime of any religious group any place on this planet.

Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned, the witnesses who are appearing at this hearing today are extremely well qualified and the organizations which they represent are in the forefront of those who are leading the fight against anti-Semitism. I regret that my good friend, Israel Singer, the Secretary General of the World Jewish Congress, is unable to be here with us today for this hearing and to share his insight on the scourge of anti-Semitism. Israel is one of the leading spokesmen in the fight against racism and for tolerance and mutual respect and understanding. Mr. Chairman, Israel Singer has submitted written testimony for this hearing, and I ask unanimous consent that it be placed in the record of this hearing.

I also ask, Mr. Chairman, that the subcommittee files include the excellent report *Anti-Semitism Worldwide—1994* which is prepared by the Project for the Study of Anti-Semitism at Tel Aviv University with the support of the World Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League. We are fortunate to have this excellent report which chronicles anti-Semitic activity around the world. I commend both the Anti-Defamation League, whose representatives will testify today, and the World Jewish Congress for their far-sighted support in the preparation of this fine report.

I thank you for holding these hearings.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, very much, Mr. Lantos. And I want to just note that Mr. Lantos and I have traveled together on human rights missions around the world. We have forged a common bond fighting the tyranny of the Ceausescu regime, for example. We were in the Baltics together. We have fought the good fight in the Balkans, as well. He is an indefatigable fighter for human rights and it is so good to have him here today, joining us in this very important hearing. His own hearings, in which I participated as a member of the subcommittee, were the trailblazers that kept this issue in the forefront of many people's minds, both in Congress, in this town, and in this nation. So, I want to commend Mr. Lantos for his good leadership, not just on behalf of Soviet Jewry and in the fight against anti-Semitism, but for all human rights.

I would like to now introduce our very distinguished panel, panel No. 1, for today's hearing and then ask each person to present their testimony.

Peter Stavrakis is currently Deputy Director of the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Vermont. He has created and participated in numerous research and training programs devoted to as-

sisting Soviet successor states in developing the institutions required to manage the transition for free-market democracies.

Paul Goble is a senior fellow at the Potomac Foundation in McLean, Virginia. From 1992 to 1995, he served as a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He also served as special advisor for Soviet nationality problems and Baltic affairs at the State Department from 1990 to 1991. From 1982 to 1989, Mr. Goble was a special assistant for Soviet nationalities in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Trained at Miami University and the University of Chicago, Mr. Goble is the editor of four volumes on ethnic problems in the former Soviet Union, and has written more than 100 articles on ethnic and nationality questions.

Alla Gerber graduated from Moscow State University's Law School. Ms. Gerber is a journalist and writer, and has published over 1,000 articles in major newspapers and magazines; she has also written eight books. Ms. Gerber is a member of the Coordinating Council in Russia's Democratic Choice Party. She is also president and founder of Russia's Holocaust Center. From 1993 through 1995, Ms. Gerber was elected to the State Duma of the Russian Federation. During those years, she was a member of the Duma's Committee on Culture, Science and Education.

Sergei Sirotkin received a Doctorate from the Rostov-on-Don University Law School. He has also attended the Moscow Diplomatic Academy. From 1990 through 1993, he was a member of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, where he chaired the Subcommittee of Legislative Matters on the Committee of Human Rights. Beginning in 1993, Mr. Sirotkin was vice chairman of the Committee on Human Rights under President Boris Yeltsin.

And, finally, Gilbert Kahn received his A.B. degree from Columbia University and his Ph.D. in Politics from New York University. He worked for 2 years in Washington and is currently an associate professor in the Department of Political Science at Kean College in New Jersey. Dr. Kahn's academic interests concentrate on American Government decisionmaking, with an emphasis on executive-legislative relations in foreign policy, with a special focus on the Middle East. Dr. Kahn's research has been widely published in an array of publications, both scholarly and journalistic.

At this point, Doctor, if you could begin with your testimony.

STATEMENT OF PETER J. STAVRAKIS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, THE KENNAN INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED RUSSIAN STUDIES

Dr. STAVRAKIS. Thank you, very much, Mr. Chairman. In the interest of time and with your permission, I will be summarizing portions of my written statement.

Russian society and politics are moving decisively away from the West and reform in the months preceding that nation's pivotal Presidential elections. Even if President Boris Yeltsin is successful in winning a second term, his policy shifts and radical personnel changes have made his government increasingly indistinguishable from Gennady Zyuganov's Communist Party of the Russian Federation. Russia has moved into a post-reform era where the choices are between a resurgent Communist Party or an ex-Communist whose behavior casts him in the best tradition of Moscow's auto-

cratic tsars. The internal changes which inevitably accompany such a shift only add more dark colors onto the somber portrait of a society struggling to emerge from a debilitating economic reform and a psychically devastating civil war in Chechnya.

The impact of this change is already visible among the community of Russian scholars visiting the Kennan Institute here in Washington. Some scholars have expressed concern for the consequences that may befall them for having pursued their studies in America, which by virtue of their coming here associates them too closely, perhaps fatally, with the United States. Indeed, these individuals are overlooked heroes of Russia's reforms, as they have placed their professional and personal future in jeopardy for the opportunity to acquire new knowledge through contact with the West. Sadly, foreigners have also felt the return of coercive institutions and practices of the old Russia. On a recent visit to the Republic of Karelia, for example, I was distressed to learn that my interviewees had subsequently been "visited" by members of the Russian Federal Security Services, one of the bureaucracies that replaced the Soviet KGB.

These events foretell a harsher future for Russia than Western reform had anticipated, reinforced by an economic picture that reflects Moscow's prosperity as the rest of the country is marginalized. The capitol basks in an economic boom and an abundance of foreign products even as Russian regions struggled to survive. Farmers in Krasnodar Krai, for example, face an uncertain future as their traditional domestic markets have been inundated by Western products or cut off by a disintegrating transport infrastructure. Similarly, Karelians in the far north have had to endure bone-chilling cold as the republic is unable to raise sufficient revenues to pay for its heating bills. After 4 years of reform, Russia is an economically and politically divided society, worn down to the point that individuals are driven by elemental desires for the simplest of goals: a warm apartment, a stable job, a livable wage. Tragically, these basics of life are now farther off for many Russians than they have ever been. In these circumstances, the commitment to the core values of civil society is eroded, replaced instead by a nostalgia for the Communist past.

This assessment runs counter to the happier scenarios that have depicted Russia as "on track" toward the creation of a successful democracy. The problem with the optimistic view stems from the exclusive attention Americans have focused on procedural, rather than substantive issues. America likes nothing better than a "good"—that is well-run—election, as the defining characteristic of a functioning democracy. But this often obscures their ability to assess the values embedded within the emerging society. From a substantive perspective, developments in Russia are sobering; for they point to political and social disequilibria that will place far greater strains on democratic institutions than has yet been the case, and will present the West with a much different political climate than in recent years. And should the Communist Party of the Russian Federation emerge victorious in forthcoming Presidential elections, few Russian observers doubt that existing democratic procedures will long survive.

What I would like to present in the remaining minutes is a brief description and analysis of the key factors I believe have contributed to this situation: the growing economic divide between Moscow and the regions, the persistence of byzantine politics within the murky central State structure, and the new political parties and tendencies that are challenging the Yeltsin Government for power.

The economic marginalization of regional Russia has proceeded apace during reform and has worked to create a situation where democracy has functioned in the regions by permitting them to send a strong anti-Western and anti-reform delegation to Moscow to speak for the vast majority of the population.

This presents Russia with a painful choice: either the center continues reforms at the expense of regional opposition, or regional demands must be reflected in government policy. The first option necessarily entails the abandonment of democracy, while the second effectively terminates economic reforms. Even worse, a Communist, or perhaps a Zhirinovsky or Fascist victory in the near future may succeed in ending both the political and economic dimensions of the reform interlude.

The new regional assertiveness draws its strength from the growing economic gulf that separates a prosperous center from an increasingly impoverished periphery. According to data compiled by the Analytical Administration of the Russian President, average income in Moscow in July, 1995 was more than three times higher than that of Russians living outside of Moscow's Ring Road. More significantly, average per capita income was below subsistence levels in 68 of Russia's 89 component jurisdictions. In Moscow, that figure was a stunning 243 percent above the subsistence amount.

Apparently, Russia has done little more than substitute the old imperative of building socialism in one country with a new goal of building capitalism in one city. We confront a country and institutional structures which are anything but normal. President Yeltsin has emulated the best of his tsarist and Communist predecessors by doling out political appointments to mollify key sectors of the political elite. For their part, Russia's new politicals, like the boyars and Central Committee members that preceded them, have embraced these elections as a prelude to the court politics that determines who shall win access to key ministries.

The central question, I think, comes down to this: have we witnessed a decisive breakthrough toward civil society in recent years, or simply the evolution of an intricate parliamentary byzantium? The latter is more nearly the case, yet even this minimal achievement may be undermined by the deteriorating economic conditions throughout Russia. The present Russian system resembles the onion-like nature of the Soviet totalitarian system described by Hannah Arendt: an outer layer of electoral politics which, when removed, reveals another, more significant layer of elite alliances and bureaucratic interests. Layer follows upon layer until arriving at the nucleus of the Soviet system: a complex of post-KGB security agencies and key bureaucracies linked to key political elites, the emerging economic class, and the criminal underworld; all of which are suspended in an institutional slurry of inter-linked ministries, enterprise and often nebulous non-governmental organizations.

At this center is Yeltsin, who remains master of the game—assuming his health holds out. What all of this has amounted to is a country that has moved, in my view, decisively away from reform as we have originally understood it—and from Western values. The Communist Party or Communist parties that competed in recent elections could hardly have hoped for a better outcome in last December's ballot. Three of the top ten parties—the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, the Agrarians, and Working Russia—were Communist, and their combined popular vote on party lists was 30.61 percent. The additional minor Communist parties brings this figure to nearly one-third of the electorate that cast ballots in favor of Communist. In addition, the biggest surprise was Vladimir Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, which did far better than expected, evidently at the expense of the Congress of Russian Communities, headed by the former Lieutenant-General Aleksandr Lebed.

What all of this means in terms of ethnic relations is not so easily summed up. There is little doubt that Zhirinovsky will undertake repressive, ethnically based policies should he have the opportunity to do so; and I would not exclude the possibility that he can be elected as president of Russia, although I put it at a lower level of probability. Gennady Zyuganov's Communist Party, however, has a much higher probability of success, but its stand on ethnic issues is much more difficult to determine. The radical Communist parties, however, will likely find it easier to embrace ethnically divisive themes.

The only unknown among the nationalists remains Lebed. He has a checkered history. He has received negative assessments for his strong support of the Russian diaspora in former Soviet republics and for his past role as chief suppressor of many ethnic disturbances in the former Soviet Union. On the other hand, he remained virtually the lone candidate in the nationalist camp who did not base his campaign explicitly on ethnic themes. However, his poor showing in the recent election may mean that his future as a Presidential candidate is also limited.

Two final points bear mention. First, we must keep in mind that analysis in the West focuses primarily on leading personalities, but it is the behavior of rank and file that plays a decisive role in the evolution of future Russian politics. Whatever we might say about Zyuganov's potential as a leader and his likely policies must be tempered by the reality that his popular base of support remains far more aggressive than he is himself. Consequently, there is a great danger that his rhetorical statements, intended perhaps solely for effect, will be taken literally by an electorate that will then hold him accountable following the elections. The same can clearly be said of Zhirinovsky as well.

The second point is really a question: if Russia moves toward the pole of intolerance, which ethnic groups will bear the brunt of discrimination and injustice? The evidence clearly points to peoples of Caucasian origin as the principal focus of any official or unofficial policy of ethnic repression for the moment. Indeed, the edict of Mayor of Moscow in 1994, which targeted people of "caucasian nationality" for search and possible eviction from Moscow, was a precursor of what could follow. I would add as an aside that I hap-

pened to be in Moscow at this time and was detained and searched three times by both the militia and the security forces solely on the basis of my physical appearance.

A November, 1995 survey of 4,000 Moscow residents further confirmed this trend. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents expressed anti-Jewish sentiment; but a startling 88 percent, nearly nine in ten people, expressed hostility to people from the Caucasus. This is undoubtedly a result of the continuing war in Chechnya and the subsequent seizure of Russian hostages by Chechan rebels.

What is the overall implication of such evidence? I believe Russia is entering a post-reform period which will be characterized by a more authoritarian government which may, and probably will be, accompanied by greater intolerance toward ethnic minorities. If so, Caucasian peoples will be first in line to feel the brunt of any such change in policy. More importantly, the factors I have alluded to are largely beyond the control of any individual or set of government institutions to control, hence all parties to the contest of political succession will feel the pressure to find scapegoats and claim these to be the "real" reason behind Russia's problems. If a cohesive and rational government existed in Russia, the outcome might be different, but such is not the case for now or the foreseeable future.

I do not believe that the Russian people are inherently anti-Caucasian, anti-Semitic, or anti- any other ethnic group. However, as an analyst, I can appreciate that a population that has been subjected to war and humiliation, declining life expectancy and wages below minimum subsistence levels, and a currency that is one ten-thousandth its value of 5 years ago, as well as other tragedies that have befallen it, will soon seek to vent its frustration on the easiest targets. This is the situation for many Russians today and their desperation can only be redressed by attacking the root causes of the socio-economic nightmare that has befallen Russia. For when the Caucasian peoples cease being the focus of anger, Russia's unresolved dynamic of despair will move on to some other ethnic group. My view is that this will not take the form of open violence by Russians—except perhaps in isolated instances. Rather, the depressing conditions in the life of the average Russian will simply make injustice a great deal easier to tolerate.

This, I believe, can still be changed, but only through policies that restore a sense of hope in the Russian population that there really is life after communism. Russian leaders and Western reformers have yet to meet this challenge.

Thank you, very much, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Stavrakis appears in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, very much for your excellent testimony and your observations, which I think will be most helpful to this subcommittee and to the Congress.

Mr. Goble.

STATEMENT OF PAUL A. GOBLE, SENIOR FELLOW, THE POTOMAC FOUNDATION

Mr. GOBLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to commend you for holding this hearing and I thank you for inviting me. It is

important that we talk about something that most people, at the present time, are unwilling to face.

The threat of anti-Semitism in the post-Soviet states is greater today than it has been at any time in the last decade. The inability of the governments in the region to enforce their own laws or follow up on their promises to international organizations and to us, the worsening economic situation throughout the region that is leading to a search for scapegoats, and an increasing number of politicians and officials who see anti-Semitism as a useful tool to advance their causes all contribute to that threat. Unfortunately, far too many in the West have failed to see this threat because it takes a form so radically different from that which we faced in Soviet times. Even more tragically and as a result of our failure to understand what is going on, some Western governments, including our own, have taken steps which unintentionally make the situation a great deal worse.

Three years ago, when I was privileged to appear before your committee, I suggested that there were three important differences we needed to understand between what had been true of anti-Semitism in Soviet times and what would be true of anti-Semitism in the post-Soviet environment. First, there are now fifteen countries, not one. We are not talking about a single situation, but fifteen very different ones.

Second, virtually all of these countries are experiencing social and economic dislocations far beyond our ability to imagine, and that these kinds of dislocations have been, in this region and elsewhere, the historical seed bed for anti-Semitism.

And third and most important, anti-Semitism has been privatized, like much else in the region. That is to say: in contrast to Soviet times, when the government was in a position to decide how much anti-Semitism would be manifested and how much would be sponsored, now the governments are too weak to be in a position to do much about it. Consequently, the way in which we have traditionally measured the amount of anti-Semitism in this part of the world is no longer a valid measure. The number of anti-Semitic publications, the number of anti-Semitic articles in leading newspapers, the number of anti-Semitic speeches by politicians does not necessarily tell you, either with regard to the Russian Federation or elsewhere in the region, what is going on at the local level.

Over the past 2½ years since the first hearing, all of those observations have been reenforced by developments. In the first case, we have to recognize that the ability of the authorities in most of these countries to control the situation is far less than it was even in 1993. The governments are unable to pay their militaries or police on a regular basis, cannot or choose not to enforce existing legislation or treaty requirements, and frequently stand idly by as powerful criminal groups or the population, itself, behaves atrociously toward traditionally despised groups.

Moreover, the governments are very different on this measure. The central authorities across this region frequently are not in a position to ensure that local officials will obey the rules—the rules of the game as articulated by the central authorities, and in many cases—in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus—the behavior of local offi-

cials is far worse than the behavior of the central authorities, which are much more carefully and confidently monitored by Western organizations and Western governments.

This presents the United States and other governments with a serious problem. In the past, it was a simple matter to praise or damn the Soviet regime regarding anti-Semitism in this region depending on what that government said, because what it said was a good indicator of what, in fact, would take place on the ground. That is no longer the case. Frequently, the governments are saying all the right things; some of the governments aren't. The President of Belarus has made the unfortunate observation that Adolph Hitler of Germany had the right idea in many regards. And, of course, we have the problems of some of the leading politicians in Russia.

But our problem is that if the governments are telling us that they are against anti-Semitism, and yet they are unable to do anything to prevent its emergence, what do we do? If we criticize the government, in effect, we are saying "you're lying to us." If we don't criticize, the situation may get worse.

That problem is compounded by the economic and social dislocations that are taking place in virtually all of the 15 post-Soviet states. Most are in deep recession of more than 50 percent. Many are experiencing social traumas of kinds that this country, fortunately, has never had to go through; even the basic demographic indicators are extremely frightening. One example, to follow on Peter's comments: in Russia, life expectancy for males has dropped by almost a decade in the last decade, something that has never happened before in a country in times of peace.

Given those kinds of domestic challenges, it is hardly surprising that conflicts among various groups are on the rise. As we know from our own countries, when times are good, or at least thought to be improving, people tend to look with confidence on themselves and with some sympathy to others. When times are bad, or thought to be getting worse, most people do not see the problem in themselves, but tend to blame others and to see any other group as a dangerous competitor for scarce resources. Given the inheritance of Soviet-sponsored ethnicity throughout the region, many people in these countries are inclined to blame others along ethnically and religiously defined lines, much more so than is true elsewhere.

With rare exceptions—the Sephardic Jews of the Caucasus and Central Asia and the Jewish community in Estonia—Jews have been a traditional object of distrust and hatred throughout this entire region. At times, the governments have fought this. But now, despite almost universal promises to do good and to conform to international norms, these governments find themselves unable, and in some cases unwilling, to oppose this ugly popular view.

And third, precisely because anti-Semitism is now so widespread at the popular level and so blatant, an increasing number of politicians, especially in the Russian Federation in Belarus, but elsewhere as well, are exploiting it as they seek to take power. The first and second largest political parties in Russia are both led by men who have made openly anti-Semitic statements. Most distressing of all, we now have a Russian Government with a foreign minister who openly consorted with the worst and most anti-Israel politicians in the Middle East, a pattern of behavior that few Jews

or few Russians, it should be said, in the Russian Federation will ignore. Mr. Yeltsin is clearly prepared to use such implicit anti-Semitism to try to win support for his own reelection campaign, whatever he may say to us through diplomatic channels and whatever our government may say he has promised.

Unfortunately, we have been sending him and virtually all the other leaders in this region a message that such behavior makes sense and has few penalties. In October, 1993, the U.S. Government refused to criticize Mr. Yeltsin and his government when they—and it was Yeltsin who backed the mayor of Moscow it should be said by bringing in militia from the countryside—expelled "persons of Caucasian nationality" from Moscow after Yeltsin's conflict with the Russian Parliament. By failing to say anything at that time was justified in the name of not wanting to undermine Yeltsin and, unfortunately, reflected in American willingness to believe the worst about the Slav and Muslim groups. But the Administration's failure to speak out then has had three consequences since that time, all of which are extremely dangerous.

First, it has led the governments of the region to conclude—and I have had the privilege and opportunity to speak to some of them—that the United States will tolerate virtually anything, including blatant racism if it is done by those with whom we want to deal, as long as they are promising that that's not what they're about.

Second, it has led politicians throughout the region to conclude that treating people not according to their individual merits, but rather because they are members of a particular ethnic group, is something the international community will tolerate in this part of the world. So far, it is just with regard to the Chechans and the North Caucasians, but that is fairly easy to extrapolate.

And finally, it has sent a message to the Jews of Russia that they could be next—if not immediately, then soon. After all, the only previous occasion when Moscow used an expression analogous to the one used in October, 1993 was in 1952 when Stalin spoke of and attacked "persons of Jewish nationality," a connection that was not lost on my Jewish friends in Moscow with whom I spoke during those weeks.

Obviously, no one in our government thought that by not criticizing Yeltsin, he was opening the way to anti-Semitism, but in fact that is what we have done.

Now, some in the Administration are urging that the Lautenberg Amendment not be extended beyond September 30. Obviously, Washington hopes to send yet another message that Yeltsin and Russian democracy are doing well and also that we will be tougher about immigration, which says some very unpleasant things about us as Americans. But this is the wrong message at the wrong time. Yeltsin, quite obviously, is no longer a Democrat and Russian democracy is not doing well.

One indication: take a look at the current issue of U.S. News and World Report and its article on "The Creeping Return of the Soviet System." In that article, Russian human rights pioneer Aleksandr Podrabinek says that he thinks "it's time" to renew his column on Soviet political prisoners, a column he had discontinued 6 years ago for lack of a subject. And once the government of Russia or the

governments of others of these States begin to identify political prisoners, all past history suggests that Jews will be especially numerous among them.

We can ignore that judgment only at our peril, and for our sakes, as well as those of both the more than one million Jews and all other citizens of the former Soviet states, we should remember that Pastor Neimuller's observation about speaking out as soon as possible remains just as valid now as it was in the 1930's.

Thank you, very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Goble appears in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, very much, Mr. Goble, and I appreciate your comments and look forward to asking you some questions.

Ms. Gerber.

STATEMENT OF ALLA GERBER, FORMERLY A MEMBER OF THE DUMA

Ms. GERBER. Thank you, very much. Thank you, very much for the invitation. Excuse me, my English is not so good, but I think it is better for me if I speak Russian to my friend. Excuse me.

[Through Interpreter.[1]] Among the other things that have been said about me, I'm also a representative of Gaidar's party. It's the party named Democratic Choice of Russia, and it is actually a party that represents that democracy which has been spoken about as being so complicated right now. So, it is impossible to speak about the topic of anti-Semitism without understanding in more broad terms the situation in my country.

The most important thing to understand is that it is not the reforms that are responsible for the catastrophic situation in which Russia now finds itself. It is the constant sabotage of those reforms that is responsible and the people that have sabotaged the reforms consistently. And Russia, after Gaidar, has been reminiscent of an airplane that takes off from a runway, flies in a certain direction, and then it loses its control, so that it goes any which way and it is just kind of hanging there and it is hard to say whether it is going to drop down into an infinite hole or whether it is going to fly back up or what direction it is going to go.

And it is a constant sabotage of the reforms, as well as the war in Chechnya, which you all know about. And, as I said, the constant sabotage by both the Communists, who now surround Yeltsin and acts as his advisors, as well as others that are now trying to come to power, that are responsible for the position in which Russia now finds itself. And the culmination of our troubles was the war in Chechnya, which brought us to a complete dead-end. And now the whole world has to look for ways out of this situation, since the situation that we now find ourselves in poses a serious danger to life as we know it. And, as we all know, genocide is never genocide against one population only. It is always genocide against everybody.

Yes, it is true that Yeltsin is probably at his heart and soul not a true Democrat. However, he was brought to power by the Democrats. He is a symbol therefore of democracy and, therefore, he is the one that we have to look at in terms of electing somebody who

[1] Alla Rutstein, interpreter.

symbolizes democracy and whether we should support him in that vein in the future. Of course, Russia is very far from democracy. It is still learning. And who is it that can try to get in our way as first graders in democracy? Who is it that is going to stop us from moving in the direction of democracy?

On the night between the third and fourth of October, 1993, a man named Baburin made a statement that all Democrats are going to be hanging on the Christmas or holiday tree in the Kremlin and this person is now one of the top advisers of candidate for President, Zyugonov.

During the day on the third of December, 1993, there was a group of people that appeared in Moscow who were wearing black outfits with swastikas and people back then were very surprised to see them. Today, however, this is not a surprise. This is an everyday occurrence. And these very same Fascists that were seen back then are the people that are headed by a man named Barkashov, who is also one of the greatest supporters now of Zyugonov. And Barkashov is the one that coined the phrase that is so familiar to all of us today, that "Jews, just as Gypsies, will be destroyed in the near future." And Barkashov is the one that is proposing a law, which similar to Hitler, in which mixed marriages—or those who are causing the genocide of the Russian nation are going to be persecuted by law.

And the Russian National Party is another extremist party. It is headed by a man named Belyaev. He was recently released from prison and he is now also one of the most ardent supporters of Zyugonov. I have never heard Zyugonov refuse help from his friends.

And now I would like to talk about the persona of Mr. Zyugonov, because I see that as our main problem today. There is a myth that Zyugonov was a social Democrat; but, no, ladies and gentlemen, that is not what he is. He is a national socialist, and I will prove this to you right now.

It is true that Zyugonov was not the author of the leaflet that I got in my mailbox in the Duma that all "Yids"—or Jews—should be destroyed. It is true, he never directly said that. And also, it was not Zyugonov, but was one of Zhirinovsky's allies in the Duma that proposed that Jewish or "Yid" propaganda be put to an end in the Duma. It was also not Zyugonov who said that. And it was not Zyugonov, but it was Mr. Iluchien, who is chairman of the Committee on Security in the Duma and a close associate of Mr. Zyugonov who started the whole battle against Mr. Soros and the Soros Foundation. And when he spoke in the Duma about Mr. Soros, his first sentence was "Ladies and Gentlemen, you must remember that Mr. Soros is a Jew by nationality." And then afterwards, it was said that Mr. Soros was a spy and that he is doing everything to corrupt our children, since his textbooks are being distributed in our schools.

But, I am not going to say anything more about what Mr. Zyugonov did not do or say. Now, I am going to tell you about what he actually did say. Mr. Zyugonov is an idealogy and he is interested in the spiritual health of the population.

It was Mr. Zyugonov who wrote in his latest book, "It is only Stalin who understood how important it is for Russia to return to its

original century-old tradition and the Russian spiritual ideal. And as a result of these ideas of Mr. Stalin, occurred the whole program instituted by Stalin of ideological restructuring, which lasted from 1944 to 1952"—this is also Zyugonov writing. And I will continue the quote "Stalin was lacking from between 5 and 7 years of life in order to completely fulfill his program of ideological restructuring."

Now let's remember what this program of ideological restructuring really was. Stalin started with the people of the Caucasus and ended with the Jews. And in 1945, he started the genocide of Ingushe, Dizhent, Kalmyke—these are all Central Asian peoples—that was in 1945. That is who he started with. However, even with the genocide of these people, Russia still found itself in an economic crisis.

And Russia, of course, was supposed to be a victorious country, a big victor, and how do you explain to people why such a victorious country finds itself in such dire economic circumstance? Because the enemy should be somebody very real, very pleasant, and somebody you are used to. And then that is where Jews came into the picture and to the aid of Stalin. And this always was the case during all economic crises in Russia, so I am not going to get into a historical discussion about it.

First, there was the battle against bourgeois cosmopolitans and Jews; the destruction—murder of the whole Jewish anti-Fascist committee, who were all shot, which consisted of the greatest writers, poets, musicians, composers, actors who were Jewish. But this didn't really work. People didn't understand who these cosmopolitans were and who these writers were. This was too vague.

So then Stalin thought of this whole trial of the engineers—the harmful engineer. One of the victims of this whole persecution of Jewish engineers was my father, who was the head of a large factory in Moscow. But this, too, was not enough. They had to find an enemy who was completely familiar to every family, every mother, every child—somebody who was very close to everyone—and that's where they came by the doctors' plot or the "evil Jewish doctor." Everybody knows about the doctor's plot of—supposedly the doctors that were trying to poison people, so I am not going to go into it.

But I remember, even very well now, how in our little neighborhood pharmacy, the people, especially women, came and they started beating upon our pharmacist, Mr. Aronov, who everybody had loved before this whole doctors' plot. And now there are archives that talk about how all of this was supposed to conclude. One of the doctors was supposed to be publicly executed and the rest of the Jews from the big cities were to be sent to Siberia.

It is this ideological restructuring about which our candidate for president, Zyugonov, laments today. It was very hard to get President Yeltsin to issue a decree against Fascist propaganda and Fascist groups. It was very hard for our faction in Parliament to obtain hearings about the dangers of fascism in Russia present, but we were able to get those hearings.

So why is it now that the decree, the hearings, as well as the law that exists in the books, is not working? And a very clever statement was made by Major General Mikhailov, who is the head of the FSB—what the KGB has become—and he said that "Maybe

that perhaps, is it not, that the prosecutor's office is afraid of the consequences for them if they start persecuting these people if the national socialists take power?"

I don't want to go on too long, because I have taken up your attention enough, but I would like to also say that there are presently 250 Fascists, extremists publications, leaflets, magazines, etc. that are in circulation in Russia today. The most dangerous work that they are presently doing is that they are actively distributing their materials in factories, as well as in the army. But, unfortunately, even when the editors of these newspapers and leaflets and newsletters do get tried in a court of law and are tried as defendants, they still end up walking onto the street free afterwards. They never actually get convicted.

And what is really scary is all the youth clubs that are now growing that basically, they've come together as militant groups—armies, that's what they create. One such militant group of young people is in St. Petersburg. The members of these militant groups are usually young men, they're young, tall, blond—the same principles of Hitler. When 200 such people gathered in one of these clubs, the Democrats in St. Petersburg tried to see if these people could be prosecuted in the court of law, but this never occurred. And the way that they started their meeting was that they put their arm forward the same way that people used to say "Heil Hitler," except they said "hooray for Russia."

After a month of trying efforts, I, as a member of the Russian Parliament, the Duma, finally was able to go and talk to the district attorney of St. Petersburg, Mr. Yegorov, and I want to quote his answer to me. What he said was that: "This society, as well as Parliament and other official organizations, have no reason to worry about this problem. They should not worry because there have been no active consequences as of yet; nothing has yet happened."

And the latest events are 70 graves were destroyed—monuments at a cemetery were destroyed in St. Petersburg, Jewish monuments. And the Fascist who actively tried to incite people to power through blood is now freed. Also freed is the head of the very famous Fascist organization, the "Black Hundred." They are the ones that have coined the phrase, "Kill the Yids," and I found a leaflet saying, "Kill the Yids," in my mailbox in Parliament. And there is another big Fascist group, which is headed by the Governor of the city of Oryol, and he is now in our Parliament.

I would like to present a gift to the Library of Congress. These are twelve volumes about political extremism in Russia. This is an extremely rare publication. It is published by the Fund for Civil Society, which is headed by Chivias, and it is my present to Congress today and I hope it will enrich the library.

And I would like to finish with that with which I started. There is no more complicated or complex individual for us right now than Mr. Yeltsin, who betrayed, first of all, the head of our party, Mr. Gaidar. However, Yeltsin came to power at the hands of the Democrat. He was not able to adequately organize the process against the Communists and now we are also feeling the consequences. He never repented and neither did the society. But it would be horrible—it would be totally impossible for our country if, right now,

the Communists, headed by Mr. Zyugonov, came to power because these are not really Communists. These are national socialists and the consequences would be tragic.

Thank you, very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Gerber appears in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, very much, Ms. Gerber, for that very exhaustive analysis, which I think will be very helpful; and your gift to the Library of Congress I am sure will be very much appreciated.

Ms. GERBER. Thank you, very much.

Mr. SMITH. I would like to ask Mr. Sirotkin if he would make his testimony at this point.

STATEMENT OF SERGEI SIROTKIN, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER THE PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr. SIROTKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, respected ladies and gentlemen. It is an honor for me to address these hearings and to share some of the concerns that, in my view, are of particular importance in Russia's modern political contexts.

I can try to speak English all my speech, but I dare to be absolutely correct. And this is why I ask our good interpreter to help me.

[Through Interpreter.[1]] I know that I was introduced, but I would just like to remind everybody that today, officially, I am still considered the Deputy Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights under the President of the Russian Federation since our resignation was not accepted. So, you might want to keep this in mind. And I would like to say that even though I am speaking personally, I am also speaking on behalf of all the members of our committee. We have just recently published a special report of our Human Rights Commission on Human Rights in Russia in February 1996, so we all put it out and we all did it together.

In the past years, when we published our human rights report, we did not emphasize or focus specifically on xenophobia, anti-Semitism, or extremism. However, our investigations for the past year have forced us to realize what a serious problem this is, which is why there is a special subsection of the report that is devoted exclusively to this matter. And the reasons for this are easy to understand: extremism and anti-Semitism in Russia right now are becoming very widespread. It is affecting public opinion very much. And since it is affecting public opinion so much, the public, as well as the government, are starting to increase the attention to it.

My colleague, Alla Gerber, already said that in February, 1995, the Russian Parliament held special hearings on anti-Semitism and xenophobia. Also, in November, 1994, there was a special committee that the President called together of specialists that analyzed the threat of fascism and extremism in Russia, as a result of which President Yeltsin finally put out a decree condemning this kind of activity. However, I would still like to talk about this problem as it exists today.

[1] Alla Rutstein, interpreter.

First of all, I would like to say a few words, as well as cite a few statistics, because it is very important to understand that in Russia now, a whole infrastructure of anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and extremism is starting to form, and this is very important to understand. According to the information analyzed by the expert commission called by the President in 1995, there are presently 90 major coalitions or organizations in Russia that can be classified as being extremist or Fascist. Many of them are developing and growing very quickly, and forming further coalitions, collaborations, and political parties.

The real danger, the special danger lies in the fact that these organizations are trying to influence and absorb themselves into labor unions, factory workers. They are trying to affect students. They are also trying to spread their propaganda among refugees, and pretty much all the categories of the population that for one reason or another have found themselves on the margins of society. And I would like to say that these extremist and Fascist structures, they are not just dangerous in the sense that they spread literature or leaflets or information among these different groups, it is the fact that they infiltrate these groups and often, for instance, there are labor unions and workers organizations that give money to these Fascist organizations and support them financially.

I know that the second component is that there are very many publications, newspapers, magazines, etc., that propagate racism and anti-Semitism and I know that my colleague, Alla, already mentioned that there are 250 such newspapers and leaflets. Actually, according to the statistics that we did, it was 150 such publications, which is still a significant amount. The statistics we have say that from 1992 to 1995, the number of such publications have tripled. But, it does not matter if it is 150 or 250, it is like a gray devil versus a black devil. It does not matter. It is really way too much either way.

Right now, there exists a judicial chamber under the President of the Russian Federation and this judicial chamber is in charge of so-called informational disputes. It is a quasi-judicial body which is formed to protect freedom of speech and information, including protection from abuse. One thing noted by this body that is scary is that among the publications that try to propagate fascism are not just small-print newspapers—you know, things that are not widely circulated and that are minor, such as Tomorrow and Today—but also major journals and newspapers also print Fascist propaganda, such as Young Guard, Our Contemporary, and others. And among those brochures and publications that come out, enough of them are published or printed at enterprises that belong to the Ministry of Defense.

And I must say that anti-Semitism, as we are talking about today, it goes way beyond the publications and everything that we have talked about. It is much more broad. There is a lot of hatred and this hatred is being fanned by these organizations. And throughout all of this ethnic hatred that gets fanned, anti-Semitism is very visible. It is a theme that runs along all of this hatred and propaganda.

I think that the thing that becomes most dangerous here is that the ideas that we have been talking about, the anti-Semitic and

racist ideas, are being taken up not just by these small groups, but by big political parties and coalitions, a lot of which right now exercise a lot of power. And these political parties use anti-Semitism for their own political purposes, and that is what is so scary right now.

And right now, what has become familiar to many people is a quote from Zyugonov's recently published book, "Beyond the Horizon", which talks about the infiltration of the world by the Jewish Diaspora that has come out of the Soviet Union. If you wish, I can actually quote it directly to you right now. Everybody knows, of course, about Mr. Zhirinovsky. Probably it is known here; we definitely have heard about the fact that there is a correspondence between Mr. Zhirinovsky and the American Presidential candidate, Mr. Pat Buchanan. And also, there is a very famous quote by Zhirinovsky, which I will just read to you. Mr. Zhirinovsky said, "For anti-Semitism to disappear, all Jews must move to Israel."

And in terms of actual actions on the part of these groups using force, as Alla Gerber has mentioned, there was a destruction of a Jewish cemetery in St. Petersburg; also recently, 147 Jewish monuments were destroyed at a cemetery in Nizhny Novgorod; and in two places, in Moscow and in Rostov-on-Don, there were attempts to blow up synagogues; however, thankfully, they were unsuccessful.

It is true that there is no longer official State anti-Semitism that exists in Russia. However, our government and high government officials vastly underestimate the dangers of the extremism and fascism that exist in the Russian population today.

Our freedom of speech clauses and laws are quite different from the way freedom of speech is conceptualized in the United States, where it is more liberal. For us, we actually have a clause in our law about the inciting of some kind of ethnic hatred or separatism. However, this law is exercised formally and not really in practice. It exists in theory. And our committee got the following statistics: that in 1993, only one person was convicted as a result of this law; in 1994, it was zero—nobody was convicted; and in 1995, one person was convicted and he had to pay a $180 fine.

Well, I would like to add that the rights that the law gives to our prosecuting authorities are not exercised by them. They do not use these powers and these rights. For example, there is a newspaper that used to be called Today, it is actually now called Tomorrow—it is a newspaper with a nationalist circulation. And in this newspaper, it was written, "The Jews are not a nation, but a sect of degenerates." And in his official response, the deputy public prosecutor for the city of Moscow noted that this statement did not contain anything insulting to Jews. And there are a lot of examples like this in the written version of my statement. You can find more of them. If I had time, I would name them all now.

However, what I will do is I will just summarize my main conclusions. First of all, xenophobia and anti-Semitism in Russia is not just a reality, but it is a growing, widening, and spreading reality. It is becoming more and more dangerous every day. The second conclusion is that the ideologies—these Fascist ideologies express themselves not only in an openly Fascist form, but also in ideologies and activities of active and outwardly respectful political

forces. First and foremost, it is a so-called national patriotic movement and also in the activities of Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia.

Also, although we don't have sufficient basis to accuse the government of official anti-Semitism any longer, its actions to combat the intolerance of the xenophobia and anti-Semitism are clearly insufficient and ineffective. And it seems to me that the authorities greatly underestimate the danger of the spread of these ideologies and the potential harm.

So the four things that I see now as being of most concern are the following: first of all, the rise in the number of Fascist and extremist organizations; second of all, the mass media being very actively used by these organizations to spread their ideology; third, the fact that major and influential political forces and parties are using elements of this ideology to try to increase their image or use it for their own political purposes; and fourth, the underestimation of the danger by the Russian Government and their ineffectiveness in trying to do anything about it. And unfortunately, I think that the spread of these kinds of ideologies is going to grow in Russia in the near future.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sirotkin appears in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Sirotkin, thank you very much for your excellent testimony. And I would like to invite Dr. Kahn to make his presentation at this time.

STATEMENT OF GILBERT N. KAHN, PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, KEAN COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

Dr. KAHN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Gilbert Kahn. I'm an associate professor of political science at Kean College of New Jersey. I have been teaching as a full-time faculty member since 1970.

It is a great pleasure for me to appear before you today in conjunction with the additional testimony which your subcommittee is receiving on the importance of U.S. human rights policy as a consideration for U.S. foreign policy in general, and as part of U.S. immigration policy in particular.

I should point out to the committee that I am appearing here today not only because of my academic credentials and involvements, but, specifically, because I served for over 3 years—from November, 1990 until March, 1994—as a consultant to the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews. During that time, I was retained by a group of Syrian-American Jews, most of whom live in Brooklyn, New York, but many of whom reside or also have homes in New Jersey. My task with the Council was to help develop what became the campaign to rescue the Jews of Syria.

Initially, I assisted them to organize themselves at the grassroots levels, something that this particular group of American Jews had never really accomplished. In addition, working together with many of the established social service and advocacy agencies within the American Jewish community, of which many of the members of this committee are quite familiar, I designed and mounted for the Council a major campaign to educate the political leadership in

the United States concerning the plight of the Jews of Syria. We sought to gain public awareness about the conditions facing the 4,000 Jews who were then being held hostage in Syria. This campaign focused on the human rights violations occurring in Syria and the restrictions and constant fear of persecution facing the Jewish community there. In particular, our effort focused on gaining the fundamental human right for all people, in this case for the hostage Jewish community to travel as entire family units and/or to emigrate. Our hope had been that we might be able to arouse the conscience and concern of American leadership, both within the Executive as well as the Legislative branches, to gain their support in an effort to obtain the timely release of Syrian Jews.

As an American, I am very proud to say that we received an enthusiastic hearing from the highest officials of both the Bush, as well as the Clinton administrations. Members of both Administrations immediately added the concern for the plight of Syrian Jewry to their list of bilateral issues in discussions between the governments of Syria and the United States. Despite a wide-range of major issues about which the U.S. Government was concerned with Syria, members of the State Department and the White House, as well as all our Middle East negotiating teams, consistently voiced the U.S. Government's persistent concern for the plight of Syria's Jewish community and the failure of President Hafez al-Assad to permit the Jews of Syria to travel. In light of the known consistent fear of persecution of Syrian Jews, this effort became a key portion of U.S. bilateral discussions.

At the same time, we were extraordinarily impressed by the bipartisan effort on behalf of Syrian Jewry carried forth here on Capitol Hill by members of this very committee, many of whose members are still here, as well as by those who served on this committee and on other key committees at the time. Bipartisan interest which this issue generated was equally enthusiastic in the Senate, as well as in the House. The eagerness to help on this issue of Mr. Lantos, the former chairman of the International Security, International Organization Human Rights Subcommittee, as well as Chairman Gilman, then the ranking member of the Europe and Middle East Subcommittee, as well as numerous members from both sides of the aisle were crucial throughout the campaign. Without their unceasing efforts to raise the issue of Syrian Jewry in all quarters and before all relevant witnesses before this and other committees, there is no doubt in my mind that all our own personal commitment and desire would have come to nought. We will never be able to thank you all for your unqualified support on this issue.

It was due in large part to the sensitivity of the Congress to the plight of Syrian Jewry that the 4,000 Jews of Syria were freed and permitted to obtain their fundamental human right to travel; to emigrate; to be reunited with their families in the United States and some, subsequently, even in Israel. Members of Congress championed this cause in their contacts with Syrian Government officials, as well as during their visits to Syria. The Assad Government grew to understand that Congress believed that Syria's Jews did have a well-founded fear of persecution in Syria and ought to be extended the fundamental human right to travel and/or to emigrate, without leaving behind members of their immediate families

as hostages. President Assad understood that in the eyes of Congress this also meant the right to travel without posting an enormous financial bond. Mr. Chairman, as we have frequently said to many of you previously in private, I am proud to say today again, in public, we salute your efforts to stand up for the fundamental values upon which we as an American nation were founded; that the United States should be a refuge for people who indeed are facing an immediate and constant fear from persecution from hostile governments.

Permit me now, Mr. Chairman, to describe briefly for the committee the conditions facing the Jews of Syria in 1991. The Jewish community in Syria dates back to the time of the prophets in Israel. It had a significant Jewish population during the days when Jesus walked the Holy Land. Throughout the generations, the Jews in Syria lived in a state of tension with various rulers; however, for the most part, they maintained a classic, if not better than average, condition for Jews living in exile. As late as the beginning of the 20th century, there were over 40,000 Jews living in Syria, primarily in Damascus and Alleppo, with some living in the Turkish border town of Kamishli. More than half of that population emigrated to the United States and Western Europe during the early part of the 20th century. Eventually, some of them also went to Palestine.

Once Israel declared her independence in 1948, no Jews were permitted to leave the country. While initially their conditions were "tolerable", after the 1967 Six-Day War, Jews began to fear for their lives. There were anti-Jewish demonstrations, attacks on Jewish synagogues, indiscriminate round-ups of Jews, and persistent questioning of Jews concerning alleged "plots" to leave the country. Once President Assad gained power, Syria's Jews feared even more for their very lives. While there were no overt pogroms, Jews lived, indeed, in a constant state or fear of persecution. During each war or crisis between Syria and Israel, there was a dramatic upsurge in hostility.

Syria's Jews lived primarily in a ghetto. They were under 24-hour surveillance by the Mukhabarat, the secret Syrian police. While they were permitted to practice their religion in the synagogues, they were not allowed to study Hebrew as a language in the Jewish schools, only as a form of prayer. They were subjected to periodic, intermittent, and random searches, arrests, imprisonment, and torture without any legitimate charges. When they were told of charges, it usually related to efforts to express their Jewishness or because of alleged "discovered" plans to travel from Syria. Some of those imprisoned for trying to emigrate—like the Swed brothers, Eli and Selim Swed—were incarcerated for years; were tortured, were not permitted family visitation; and went months without even being informed of the charges against them. Their only clear fact—their only clear charge, was the fact that they were Jewish.

Certainly, this committee understands very well that these people, living with this well-founded fear of persecution, needed relief; needed fundamental human rights; the right to travel; the right to emigrate.

As you know, beginning in 1992 and continuing with "fits and starts" through 1993 and into 1994, President Assad began to let the Jews travel as entire families. When he permitted Syria's Jews to leave, they were forced to leave behind their homes, their possessions, and their valuables. Of the 4,000 Jews living in Syria in 1991, I am pleased to report that all but approximately 250 Jews have left. Those remaining are there of their own free will. Initially, almost all the Jews who left Syria came directly to the United States, where such wonderful organizations as HIAS (the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) and others helped to facilitate their introduction to America. Together with particular social welfare agencies within the Syrian Jewish community in America, as well as the mainstream Jewish organizations, these Jews were readily cared for and absorbed. By 1994, Syria began to permit Syrian Jews to emigrate to Israel, although still not directly. Today, over half of the Jews who left Syria have gone on to Israel. The remaining group, staying in the United States, is beginning to make a varied and impressive contribution to the life of this country, while integrating itself into our society.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, many charitable organizations come into existence each year with specific goals and aspirations. Few of these groups ever go out of business. Mr. Chairman, I am appearing today before you as the former consultant to the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews, because the Council accomplished its task, largely because of the strong pressure and active involvement of Members of Congress. Mr. Chairman, we accomplished our goal, and we, indeed, went out of business.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it is a pleasure for me to be here today. I will be happy to answer any of your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Kahn appears in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Kahn, thank you for your testimony and for your tremendous humanitarian work on behalf of Syrian Jews. And I think I can say this on behalf of all of my colleagues, Democratic and Republican: if it were not for the kind of input and expertise provided and guidance by people like yourself and others who are concerned about persecuted minorities, we could not operate effectively. You help us to keep our focus on the ball, so I want to thank you for your good work. And I, too, agree with what you said about Mr. Lantos. He has been a real leader on these issues in the past.

I have a number of questions, but the hour is getting late and we do have another panel, so I will restrict it to just a couple of questions to our experts.

Some of you probably saw the New York Times article on December 3, entitled "Rebirth of Jewish Life in Russia Cuts Emigration." And one of the lines in that article said, "Jews here in Russia remain uneasy, but are growing more confident about a place in Russian life." And, yet, we have heard today from our panelists—and I would appreciate any responses you might have to that—that, especially in light of the December 17 elections, there are some ominous clouds of anti-Semitism on the horizon.

The testimony has pointed out that there are some 250 extremist publications. There are 90 organizations that are committed to extremist activities. Since 1992 and 1995, their number has tripled.

Hatred is being fanned, even by the Defense Ministry. Mr. Goble, you talked about the idea that anti-Semitism has been privatized; and, yet, we still see the military playing a very real role in this evil.

And there is talk of legal penalties, but they are not being implemented. You know, only one conviction for these "hate crimes" in the past 3 years certainly suggests a lack of commitment by the prosecutors. As one of our witnesses pointed out, the prosecutors may indeed be fearful of what may be coming just down the line in June in terms of the political leadership.

Let me just add one other point. This subcommittee, as you know, has jurisdiction over refugee policy, and we have been very concerned over reports that the Administration and the State Department would like to wind down the former Soviet Jewish refugee program, believing that the cold war is over; it is time to say that victory has been achieved. In fact, the pendulum may be swinging back very, very swiftly in the wrong direction.

If one of you would like to begin. Mr. Goble.

Mr. GOBLE. Two thoughts. First, the problem with the New York Times report on the 3rd of December is that it was a report about Moscow and not a report about Russia. And this is typical of the problems of reporting, not only by the media, but by our embassy, which tends to focus on what is true in Moscow. Moscow, as Dr. Stavrakis has pointed out, is not Russia. There is a fundamental difference. There are many frightening things in Moscow; but the frightening things are down the pike a bit in Moscow. The really frightening things are what are happening in the suburbs of Moscow and farther away, and that is what the Times did not pick on.

The second thing is, as I indicated in my remarks, this dangerous attitude of trying to declare victory and go home; this is not something that has to be fought. I had the honor recently of being asked to testify at an INS hearing, where the U.S. Government was seeking to have a Jewish lady deported to Minsk, the capital city of a country where the President has said Adolph Hitler was right. It is an outrage that such a case could even be brought or that there was even the need for a hearing. Unfortunately, this says some very bad things about us as a people and as a government.

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Gerber.

Ms. GERBER [Through Interpreter]. Well, just a few short remarks. First of all, State anti-Semitism in Russia was the first entity that was privatized and it was taken up by the hands of hundreds of private organizations. This is a process that cannot be controlled in any way or steered. And, unfortunately, this kind of privatization spread a lot more widely and wildly than economic privatization.

And I agree with my colleague very strongly. It is true that there is Moscow and there is everything outside the boundary of Moscow and it is like two different worlds. I have traveled a lot and I understand this very well. And these reports contain a lot of examples from different small towns and cities in Russia. The problem is that even though a Jew in a small town can get a job, they still feel completely undefended. They feel defenseless because all around them are these nationalist organizations and when a na-

tionalist organization in a small town makes a statement, that's when Jews start to feel truly scared because there's nowhere for them to run.

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Gerber, does the Russian Holocaust Center have any kind of impediments placed before it by the government? Do you have a hard time raising funds for it? How do you operate?

Ms. GERBER [Through Interpreter]. This is a very, very central issue and I'm very, very happy that you asked me about it. A whole committee of people and I met with Mr. Chernomyrdin and he had come to the United States; he had gone to the Holocaust Museum here in Washington; he cried. And when he came back, he said "We're definitely going to make something like this in Russia. We're going to make an analogous museum."

However, right now, not only is there not a museum like this in existence, but we don't even have the space for a museum as of yet, and all of our archives and exhibits are in individual apartments. And the educational programs that we try to promote in schools are financed by very small funds. We don't have any financing. And the main problem is that the authorities don't understand how important this Center is, and not only because it's important to remember the Holocaust, but it's also an important way to let people know in advance what dangers might lie ahead. And the fact that the movie, "Schindler's List", completely bombed in Russia, I think, is a very, very strong indicator. I mean, nobody came out to see this movie in Russia.

Dr. STAVRAKIS. I want to add, Mr. Chairman, with regard to the New York Times and in general, that I am disturbed in recent weeks and months about what seems to me an almost willful denial on the part of much of the American media and in certain agencies of the American Government of the sea changes that are about to take place in Russia. And with regard to the quote that you mentioned about whether Jews had found a place in Russia—in Russian life, I wish that that were the case. It may be that they found a stateroom or small room on the ship; but the ship is foundering.

And for me, the key issue is the point that Paul Goble and others have mentioned about the vast differences between Moscow and other parts of Russia. The process of the development of anti-Semitism is much larger in scale than any kind of positive movement. These two things together reveal a profound disparity between center and regions.

And what we are hearing today is an indication that Russia will undergo profound changes, so neither we nor the U.S. Government should be surprised when those changes in the future emerge as far worse than we had expected. We simply should not be surprised because you are hearing from a panel telling you now that it is not going to be as good as the New York Times posits.

Mr. SIROTKIN [Through Interpreter]. I would like to just make a short comment of a general nature. It is very important when we ask the question about human rights in Russia. When we make any evaluations of the state of human rights in Russia that we take into account the following: if the state of human rights in Russia and the state of anti-Semitism in Russia is judged by the criteria that were applied to Communist Russia, Soviet Russia, then,

yes, there has been great progress made and things have changed. However, what's important is we cannot judge the situation by these criteria any longer. The whole paradigm of our criteria that we use for evaluation has to change, and that is the only way it can be fairly evaluated at present.

This is a matter of principle. It is very important to use criteria that are applied to normal democratic countries. And if those kinds of criteria are applied to advanced democratic countries, then the state of human rights in Russia is quite dire right now and it is way premature to make judgments that things have improved.

And there are two things that have to be taken into account in any evaluation of the situation. The first one is the state of the country at present, the static state; and the second factor is the dynamics of the further development of the phenomenon that we're evaluating. And if we look at the further development of this phenomenon, then I would say that the picture looks quite bleak. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much. I would like to thank this panel. I do have additional questions, but we are running kind of late. Mr. Goble, you had made the point at the Helsinki Commission recently about how we are just focused on Moscow, so that when it came to the Chechan crisis, we didn't see anything but that. And, you know, things are happening, as you and other witnesses have indicated. Our own State Department and certainly the Congress have to be better informed, in order to make wiser decisions in the future.

And we certainly messed up royally, I believe, and I think you would agree, in our responses vis-a-vis the Chechan crisis when we said it is an internal affair. Some State Department personnel characterized it as being something akin to our own Civil War, which in my view and the view of many people just gave the Russians a green light.

Mr. GOBLE. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to share with you the judgment of one Russian scholar I know about that said at a conference recently that Chechnya was as much Russia's internal affair as Auschwitz was Germany's internal affair. And we've forgotten that and the dangers from going from one to the other.

Mr. SMITH. And I think that certainly has unleashed consequences, as you and others have pointed out. We're unfortunately reaping very bitter fruit because of them. There was no solidarity in the West, and the United States offered little or no leadership with regard to saying to Chernomyrdin or to Yeltsin, himself, that it is absolutely and totally unacceptable.

And, unfortunately, I think we are now ostrich-like regarding the rise in anti-Semitism, just burying our heads and acting as if everything is just fine and dandy when it is getting worse by the day. And all of a sudden it will be upon us. All of this infrastructure that is being built by these hate groups will be used to take very severe actions against Jews, unless we speak up and speak up now with one voice. And this hearing, I think, will be very helpful in getting this information out to other members and, hopefully, to the Administration.

Ms. Gerber.

Ms. GERBER [Through Interpreter]. And I would just like to say one word and this is basically what I started with: is that we must make a condition for Yeltsin if we're going to support him—if we and other democratic factions are going to support him; that he's going to have to evaluate the situation in a very concrete way, and, specifically, this whole situation with racism and anti-Semitism, and put a concrete evaluation on it. And, otherwise, we might get Zyugonov as President and God forbid then we don't know what can happen.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Stavrakis made a very good point earlier about procedure and our personality. I will never forget when the Helsinki Commission was in Moscow years ago, while Gorbachev was on a rage. He said, "Why do you just deal with one person?" And history is repeating itself again when we just focus on Yeltsin and look at procedure, rather than at the substance of what is going on.

So, again, I want to thank this panel for their expert testimony and to invite the second panel, if they would, to come to the witness table at this point.

Leonid Stonov, former leader of the refusenik movement, now works for the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews as the international director of the Human Rights Bureaus. A significant component of Dr. Stonov's work is analysis of materials monitoring anti-Semitism and human rights in the former Soviet Union. Since he was admitted to the United States as a refugee in 1990, Dr. Stonov has returned to the former Soviet Union to conduct human rights work. There he has studied the modern situation in different post-Soviet republics and has prepared for the opening of numerous human rights bureaus.

Raisa Kagan was born in Uzbekistan. She is using a pseudonym today in order to protect her family members who are still living in Uzbekistan. Ms. Kagan worked at one company for 20 years, reaching the position of department head. For more than 2 years, she and her extended family were subjected to anti-Semitic persecution which escalated into violence that put their lives at risk. She and her family emigrated to the United States in the fall of 1995.

Tatyana Polanskaya is a Jewish attorney from Moscow who was admitted to the United States as a refugee in January 1996. She emigrated due to the anti-Semitism she and her family had faced in Moscow.

Norman Tilles will also be speaking on behalf of our Iranian refugees, on behalf of one particular person who emigrated to the United States, again, using a pseudonym to protect her identity.

I would like to ask our first witness. Doctor, if you would begin.

STATEMENT OF LEONID STONOV, DIRECTOR OF THE UNION OF COUNCILS' INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS BUREAUS IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

Dr. STONOV. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I would like to thank you for the serious concern Congress has given to the problem of anti-Semitism in the former Soviet Union, reflected in this hearing, and for giving me the great opportunity to speak about it inside this bulwark of democracy. My family and I have experienced Russian anti-Semitism firsthand. My father was condemned and imprisoned in the Gulag for being a Jewish writer.

I, myself, and my extended family, were refuseniks and actively struggled against refusal for 11 years. As director of the Union of Councils' International Human Rights Bureaus in the former Soviet Union, I have daily contact with Jewish and human rights circles in many regions there. I regularly visit many post-Soviet republics in order to monitor anti-Semitism, and inter-ethnic and inter-religious hatred. Many more examples illustrating my points are included in my written statement, which I would like to submit for the record.

While some positive changes have occurred in Jewish life in the former Soviet Union during the last 7 to 8 years, anti-Semitism continues to flourish everywhere. It is still a part of the mentality of the authorities and their governing structures. It is the ideology of many extremist, Communist, Fascist parties, and others in the "Red-Brown" movement. Anti-Semitism remains in the streets and in the crowds, and is very strong in the Russian Orthodox Church and some Moslem circles, as well.

Brought to my mind are three primary and related categories of anti-Semitism in the former Soviet Union: governmental or State anti-Semitism still exists, ideological anti-Semitism, and "street" or grassroots anti-Semitism.

State anti-Semitism can be seen in direct anti-Semitic statements by officials, in the disinclination of the police and prosecutors to stop anti-Jewish violence and propaganda, in the refusal to return confiscated religious property, and in continued harassment during the immigration process. Below are several examples.

According to President Yeltsin's former Press Secretary, Vyacheslav Kostikov, when the President's assistants showed the President anti-Yeltsin newspaper articles, they reported that the authors were Jewish or the newspapers were Zionist. Additionally, the chairmen of both chambers of the Russian Parliament, Yegor Stroyev and Gennady Seleznev, openly shared the extremistic and anti-Semitic views of Barkashov's Russian National Unity Party, Sterligov's Russian National Sobor party, and Zyugonov's Communist Party.

The Belarus President, as somebody mentioned here, Alexander Lukashenko, has also made anti-Semitic statements. We publicly praised Hitler's policy before World War II, and advocated that model for Belarus to follow.

Because the judicial system is not independent in the former Soviet Union, anti-Semitism in the law enforcement structures and organizations is part of State anti-Semitism. Of greatest concern is the general failure to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of anti-Semitic hate crimes, which sends a chilling message to all Jews. And even if, on occasion, the authorities are forced to punish the most active anti-Semites, some have been immediately pardoned. For example, by the Presidential Amnesty in honor of the 50th anniversary of the victory over Hitler in the Korchagin case.

Furthermore, in many cases, false criminal accusations are made against Jews, often connected with applications for emigration. The cases of Dmitry Fattakhov in Uzbekistan, Semyon Livshits in Russia, and Alexander Volosov in Ukraine are examples of these false criminal cases. Perhaps, too, around 150 refuseniks exist in the

former Soviet Union and a lot of obstacles on immigration process continue.

Ideological anti-Semitism of the so-called patriotic, Nationalist, Communist, and extremist parties, movements, and groups is central to their Fascist ideology and rhetoric. The xenophobic fear of outsiders is reenforced now, because modern policy is based on ethnic identification of Russia with the Russian majority, Ukraine with Ukrainians, Kazakhstan with Kazakhs, Uzbekistan with Uzbeks, and so forth.

Nikolay Lysenko, head of extremist National-Republican Party published in the Moscow magazine, "Nash Sovremennik," in 1993 and the new theory that assimilated Jews presented the biggest threat for the Russian State and should be thrown out of the country. On February 22, 1996, Vladimir Zhirinovsky, a leading candidate for President of Russia, called for deportation of Russian Jews.

According to the Moscow Anti-Fascist Center, more than 7,000 anti-Semitic articles and leaflets are published every week all over the former Soviet Union. There are dangerous anti-Semitic organizations and leaders across the former Soviet Union, including UNA-UNSO in Ukraine and Zhastar in Kazakhstan.

Grassroots anti-Semitism envelops the whole former Soviet Union and remains a standard part of life. Many Jewish apartments in Kiev, Tashkent, Sevastopol, Krasnodar, Rostov, and Penza were burned and damaged. In 1995, we learned of 112 incidents where swastikas were drawn on the walls of synagogues, Jewish houses and apartments. Jewish people constantly are insulted with the names "zhid" or "kike" in public places. Vandalism of Jewish cemeteries occurred constantly in 1995–1996 in places including St. Petersburg, Tbilisi, Riga, Lvov, Kishonev, Tashkent, and others. Synagogues were attacked with guns and bombs, or set on fire, about 25 times in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Rostov, Kostroma, and other places in 1995 and 1996.

Especially unprotected are Jewish people who are making preparations for emigration. For example, in Baku, a Jew was terribly beaten in December, 1995, before immigration to the United States. His kidney was destroyed and he became disabled. There are hundreds of such cases.

The current situation with anti-Semitism in the former Soviet Union can be described as a permanent, artificially maintained readiness for mass Jewish pogroms in these countries that have historically anti-Semitic traditions. This readiness is supported and encouraged by massive anti-Semitic propaganda on the right and left of the political spectrum, and has never been stopped by the authorities. The situation reminds me of pouring lighter fluid on a pile of twigs and waiting for a lit match. Because anti-Semites in the former Soviet Union "keep their gunpowder dry," Democrats inside the former Soviet Union and in the West should be permanently vigilant and watch for their activity, as they failed to do in the 1930's in Weimar, Germany.

I am sure that no open mass anti-Jewish pogroms have occurred thus far in the former Soviet Union, only because of monitoring and attention to this problem from Western governments, Parliaments, and grass-root organizations. It is necessary to help

Democrats in the former Soviet Union to develop infrastructure of human rights groups in order to combat extremism and inter-ethnic violence. I firmly believe that the doors of the United States of America should be widely opened for Jewish refugees.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to address you on this crucial problem. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Stonov appears in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Stonov, thank you for your testimony. I, myself, back in 1981 embarked on my first human rights trip to the former Soviet Union, to what is now St. Petersburg. I will never forget meeting people like Yuli Kozaroshky and many others who were then long-term refuseniks. I was moved not only by their courage and their steadfastness in their beliefs, but also by the fact that the government had made them persona non grata when they sought to emigrate. And you are testifying that a similar situation occurs today when somebody is getting ready to exit.

As I said in my opening comments, too many people think that the days of severe repression have long since past. But, again, as we have heard today and have seen over the last 1½ to 2 years, anti-Semitism regrettably is on the rise. This government and this Congress better wake up to that fact.

So, I thank you for your excellent testimony.

Dr. STONOV. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Raisa.

STATEMENT OF RAISA KAGAN, VICTIM OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN UZBEKISTAN

Ms. KAGAN [Through Interpreter].[1] Honorable Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to give my testimony today about the spread of anti-Semitism in Uzbekistan.

I would like to start my testimony by telling you about an occurrence. This happened during a big holiday, the 9th of May. This is our day of victory in 1993. At the place where I worked, there was a big banquet organized at which the heads of all the divisions of our organization were present. And at that point, a director of one of the divisions stood up and he said that "There is no place for Yids at our table." Nobody that was present protested or told him to be quiet. And, of course, nobody demanded an apology.

I got up and I slapped him on the cheek, and then he pushed me down so that I fell. And since I felt very degraded and very scared, I called the militia. The militia came. They wrote up a report making two copies of the report, both of which they took with them. Since I was very offended and frightened by this incident, I appealed to the Bukhara Jewish Center named Simha for their help and protection.

Everybody in the Jewish organization was outraged, so they wrote up a collective letter of protest, which they mailed to the management of my organization protesting the public anti-Semitic statement of one of the directors of the organization. However, in answer to this protest, a big official celebration was planned for this guilty person because it was his anniversary.

[1] Alla Rutstein, interpreter.

After that, the atmosphere, both at home and at work, greatly worsened for me. I got many anonymous phone calls with threats and insults. Shortly afterwards, I received a phone call where I was invited to go visit the cemetery where my parents were buried. And when I went to the cemetery, I found both of their monuments destroyed. And at work, I was told that unless I took back my protest, as well as took back the protest that the Jewish organization had written to our organization, if I didn't do that, that I would be fired.

And so, therefore, I had to choose between losing my job and defending my dignity. And the circumstances started evolving much faster than I could even make a decision. In October 1993, somebody made an attempt to set our house on fire. Then near the gates of our house, my daughter's fiancé was very seriously beaten up and, also, my husband was attacked and his collar bone was broken. Then my son was called in by the military—to the military headquarters, where they took away his so-called military ticket, his military registration. And when he came back a couple of days later to pick up his registration, he was told that they do not have it, that he's not registered with them, and they fined him for not being registered.

At my workplace, they kept demanding that I deny or take back my protest to the militia, my complaint that I made to them, as well as the protest that was made by the Jewish Center to my organization. However, I realized that by doing that, I would only untie the hands of those who so seriously persecuted me and my family.

This continued for more than a year and the consequences were very bad, not just for me, but also for my family. Since I was very afraid for my children's welfare, I was forced to withdraw my complaint and my protest of the anti-Semitic comments and attacks made against me. However, my fate at work was already decided. And even though I had withdrawn my protest, I was called into our director's office and I was told that my position should be occupied by an Uzbek and not by a Jew; and, therefore, I was fired. And after I was fired, I was forced to start the process of immigration.

And I would like to conclude my statement by saying that the persecution which my family and I suffered is not just a single isolated incident of one family. Tens and even hundreds of Uzbek Jewish families today can tell stories of how their rights are severely violated. And to be a Jew in Uzbekistan today means to be defenseless; to have no rights; to be subject to constant insults; to be robbed; and, also, most importantly, to be robbed of one's dignity to the point where one feels him or herself to be a non-entity, a nothing.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Kagan appears in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much for your testimony. And I would like to ask our next witness, if you would make your presentation at this point.

STATEMENT OF TATYANA POLANSKAYA, RECENTLY EMIGRATED FROM THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

Ms. POLANSKAYA [Through Interpreter. [1]] Mr. Chairman and honored members of the committee, I am very thankful to you for the honor of inviting me to this highly important hearing and giving me the opportunity to address this important issue.

My family emigrated to the United States a month ago. Therefore, my impressions and my presentation on today's situation with Jews in Russia might be interesting for you. I would like to briefly inform you about my family and to explain to you the reasons for our emigration, the circumstances that pushed us to emigrate and to make such a difficult step of moving to another country and to undertake such a serious choice.

I graduated from law school in Moscow and I had a law practice. My husband is a mechanical engineer, so he also has a higher education; and my son, who is 22 years old, was a student at the Institute of Finance. We had a very good income. We were financially satisfied. We had an apartment and a car. We definitely had enough money to spend on vacations. And I would say that our financial situation overall was very stable.

So why did we decide to radically change our life, to meet with new and significant difficulty, and to move to a lower social and financial status? There's only one answer, and the answer is the anti-Semitism in Russia; the total inability and unwillingness of the government to protect Jews from the never-ending blatant, as well as thinly veiled humiliations and persecution; the permanent fear that exists each day and each minute; and the real danger of being exposed to violence or persecution just by virtue of being a Jew. By this, I mean not only insults from people in the street, in stores, at work, and in the metro. It means being absolutely unprotected from such assaults.

I was brought up in a country of anti-Semitism, surrounded by anti-Semitism, and always knowing that my parents and I and our whole family were not the same as everybody else; that we were Jews, and that each second and each day we had to struggle and prove our right to live decently, to study, to work, and to be respected by society. This, of course, taught me to be strong and brave. And the same can be said about my son.

I would like to tell you briefly about my family's history. After I passed the Moscow University Law School entrance exams, I was told at the entrance committee that Moscow University is considered the "Forge of Russian Personnel," thus explaining that there was no place for Jews there and that the unspoken quota of Jews allowed at the University had already been filled. I was forced, along with my husband, to take classes in the evening and to work during the day.

And another example I can give you: while I was being hired for work by an official, he took my passport, where the nationality is indicated, and he said, "Now write down for me your biography, your place of birth, studies, as well as baptism." And then, as if it were with a friendly smile, he added, "Oh, that's right, you kikes are not being baptized." I was refused the job and they explained

[1] Alla Rutstein, interpreter.

to me that it had already been given to another person. However, I knew that this was a lie. The next day, I called there without identifying myself. I was told to come the next day and fill out the form. Thus, the position was definitely vacant.

My name does not sound Jewish; and, therefore, with my education and work experience, I was often invited to apply to work at big and important State organizations. But all these invitations were quickly canceled by the personnel department once they looked at my documents and found out that I was Jewish.

During my whole life, I never worked at a State or government organization. The clients at my law practice sometimes told me that even though they disliked Jews, they were using my services because they preferred to have a "sly Jew" as an attorney, rather than a Russian.

I can tell you of the act of arson which caused my parent's house to burn down, as with the houses of many other Jews who lived in that region. I can tell you about the mysterious circumstances surrounding the brutal murder of my mother, who was also a Jewish lawyer. As usual, the authorities showed absolutely no interest in investigating the case.

These days, we often hear that everything has changed in Russia, that democracy and democratic government prohibit the violation of human rights, that they protect Jews, that anti-Semitism does not exist, and that people emigrate for economic reasons. The example of my family proves that these views do not correspond with reality.

Even now in Russia, Jews must indicate that their nationality is Jewish—or Jew on all of their documents. This includes passports, job applications, birth certificates, and school records.

My son at school always had problems with his schoolmates and teachers because he was a Jew. He always had to defend his dignity using his fist because he did not want to hear insults concerning his nationality. My son was forced to leave his institute because of nationalism and anti-Semitism, and because of the scope of these phenomena. Insults and beatings were so common that he found it absolutely intolerable. When we brought the abuses to the attention of the administration of the Institute, they pretended that nothing was going on and nothing had happened.

Every day when I came to my job, and my work was actually situated close to the American Embassy and very close to the Moscow White House, I saw anti-Semitic slogans and aggressive people making anti-Semitic and waving anti-Semitic and racist signs with appeals to physically exterminate Jews. These people represent different anti-Semitic and pro-Fascist organizations and parties, and they openly propagate their activity and openly violate the rule of law and the laws that are actually on the books. And the law does not function. The law does not function because of the government's thinly veiled solidarity with the people.

Such extremist organizations as "Pamyat" and "Chernaya Sotnya," which is the Black Hundred, openly propagate inter-ethnic hatred, which is against the law. But the laws is impotent and the officials don't do anything to discourage these activities. I would like to point out that their activity is not limited to propaganda.

They are also creating armed militias, which are always ready to translate their words into action.

The government knows about it, but doesn't do anything. All the regulations and laws they create remain only on paper, while the people that are guilty remain unpunished. I often received in my mailbox anti-Semitic pamphlets and letters with physical threats. I complained to the militia; but in reply, I heard only laughter and explanations that my fears were silly and unfounded.

Recently, the situation of Jews in Russia has not become better, but it is actually growing worse. Economic and political instability, as well as everyday difficulties, always lead to scapegoating and finding the proper enemy. The No. 1 enemy in Russia is the Jew. The Jew, which should be blamed a priori for everything: for the 1917 revolution, for perestroika, for setting international relations, for everyday troubles, as well as financial problems.

But worst of all is that the government in Russia is absolutely incapable of protecting Jews from the never-ending persecution and threats of violence. They don't possess the mechanism for enforcing the laws which are already on the books, the laws which are supposed to formerly protect human rights. These laws are not functioning.

You may know that in the recent election to the State Duma, the Communists gained one-third of the seats. The whole preelection campaign and all the meetings in their support were full of anti-Semitic and pro-Fascist ideas. The label "Yid-Mason" has become an everyday term for Jews.

My family could not bear the situation any longer. I know that in the United States, I may also encounter everyday incidents of anti-Semitism. However, I can be sure that my son and my family will be protected by the law, that law that actually functions and is not merely written. We know that our family will have to probably face formidable obstacles: for instance, our English language skills are minimal, we may suffer culture shock, we probably will not get the work that we would like to have, we might suffer financial difficulties, etc. But we are ready to withstand that, having the knowledge that for the first time in our lives, we will live as free people in a free country, and our efforts and talents and desires will go rewarded.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to the U.S. Government, to HIAS, and other Jewish public organizations for the great help they provide to Jews, to those who come from Russia in the process of adaptation.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and ladies and gentlemen for your attention. Thank you very much, and I am willing to answer any of your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Polanskaya appears in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Polanskaya, thank you very much for your testimony. I think it is very important that we hear from first-person witnesses to the rising anti-Semitism. In a very few days, we will have Assistant Secretary John Shattuck before this subcommittee, where he will detail the findings of the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1995. And I think it is very important that, in anticipation of that hearing, we have the kind of first-person wit-

ness accounts that we have had today, so that we can begin getting this Administration really engaged in human rights.

Last year when we had that hearing, as some of you who were in the hearing room may know; we heard from groups like Amnesty International and others, whose testimony was that human rights are really an island within this Administration. The Administration talks about them, but nothing happens. There are no linkages to practices—to policies especially.

And this is especially important when we are talking about a complete and total revision of our refugee policy. There is talk, and the Administration seems to be acquiescing, about cutting the refugee numbers, which today stand at 110,000, down to as little as 50,000. In light of the kind of information you bring to this subcommittee and what is happening with the rising tide of refugees worldwide, it would be unconscionable, in my view, to agree to that kind of reduction. If anything, we should be increasing from 110,000 rather than cutting to 50,000. And both parties, I think, bear the blame for this xenophobia, which is occurring within our own country: close off the borders because we cannot allow any more of "them" into this country. Refugee policy and legal emigration should not be confused with the problem of illegal aliens.

Our final witness today is speaking on behalf of an Iranian who spent 2 years in prison for his practice of Judaism, and was severely tortured. Norman Tilles is going to present that testimony today.

Mr. Tilles.

STATEMENT OF SHAHIN ABKAZIAN, IRANIAN REFUGEE—READ BY NORMAN D. TILLES, PRESIDENT, HEBREW IMMIGRANT AID SOCIETY

Mr. TILLES. Mr. Chairman, I am Norman Tilles and I am privileged to be president of HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, which has a responsibility for bringing refugees from all over the world to the United States. I think the fact that in the halls of Congress and this country, the haven for persecuted, that the man that I speak for is afraid to speak because it might get back to Iran, speaks volumes about the status of Jews in Iran.

And I read, Mr. Chairman. Honored members of the committee, I am thankful for the opportunity to testify before you concerning what happened to me, as a Jew in Iran and, by extension, the general situation concerning Jews in that country. I must, however, first apologize to you for not being able to give you my name. Unfortunately, there are still people close to me in Iran who have not been able to leave. The Iranian authorities would not hesitate to seek revenge upon them if my identity were known and connected with this testimony.

My situation, while involving arrest, torture, and deprivation of human rights, was, of course, not as bad as it is for some Jews. I, after all, got released from prison and through bribes and luck, got myself and my immediate family out of Iran. As you undoubtedly know, however, Jews have been arrested and murdered in prison. Others have been arrested and then have simply disappeared.

Such extreme cases, thank goodness, have not been widespread. They do, however, happen with regularity. These atrocities, along

with cases such as mine, serve to terrorize the entire Jewish community, keeping us all in a constant state of fear. In the last several years, these extreme cases, coupled with much more widespread daily persecution of individual Jews, and intensification of the anti-Jewish propaganda campaign in the Iranian media, and a perceived increase in the efficiency and the intensity of surveillance of the Jewish community by the Iranian authorities, have all combined to raise the level of fear and anxiety among Jews.

Before going into my own situation, I would like to stress that what happened to me, while somewhat more extreme than what is happening in Iran to other members of my faith, could in fact happen to any Jew in Iran. I was held in prison as a spy, without charge, for over 2 years, tortured—and then, when finally released, was under constant surveillance. All this happened to me simply because I was Jewish. I had no more contacts with Israel or the United States than any other Jew in Iran. I had no contacts with foreigners. There was no reason to believe that I was a spy, except for the general atmosphere of hate and suspicion generated by the government in Iran against Jews.

At the time of my arrest, I was working for a company where, for several years previous, I had been harassed, sent frequently on dangerous assignments, been pressed to convert to Islam, and had my salary reduced. Little by little, my Jewish coworkers were either fired or forced out of their jobs. Shortly before my arrest, my last Jewish coworker was summarily fired after 20 years of service, without pension benefits or severance. I would have left the country at that time, but because of the government connections of my job, getting a passport was out of the question. I attempted to get a passport for my wife and my children. But at the special office for Jews at the Iranian passport service, we ran into constant delays. My wife was able to get a passport only much later, after my release from prison. It ultimately took my wife the better part of a decade to obtain a passport.

I was arrested at work. I was at first not allowed to contact my family. I was told that I was under suspicion of being a Zionist and a spy. There were no formal charges, no hearings, no trial. I was questioned for hours with blinding light shining in my eyes. I was frequently hit in the face to encourage me to talk. Occasionally, I was kept for hours in a tiny cell where I could not stand upright, lie down, or sit down. I was frequently threatened with execution. This treatment, although horrible, was not as bad as others have received at the hands of the Iranian authorities. I luckily suffered no permanent physical damage, as many Jews and others have.

After about 2 years of imprisonment, suddenly, with no explanation, I was released. I was warned, however, against any contact with the Jewish community, the synagogues, or foreigners. I was told not to leave Teheran. As I stated above, I was under constant surveillance. My phone was tapped, my mail was opened. My wife told me that during my imprisonment, our home had been subject to violent searches several times and that she had been roughly handled by the authorities. At school, my daughter was questioned concerning my activities. I lived in constant terror.

Gentlemen, I return to the claim that what happened to me could, and does, happen to Jews to a greater or lesser extent every

day in Iran. Our situation is really determined by two essential factors.

One, Jews have no protection by the Iranian courts. The police, for any serious issue, have to work with the Revolutionary Guards; therefore, they cannot seriously investigate crimes against Jews or claims filed by Jews against Muslims. Frequently, it is even dangerous for a Jew to file such a claim. Jewish property and business are routinely confiscated because a government official, or even an ordinary Muslim citizen, has decided to create a problem for a Jew. There is no hope that an Iranian court would find in favor of a Jew against a Muslim.

And, two, in the past several years, the government sponsored anti-Semitism propaganda campaign has intensified. At the beginning of the Iranian revolution, Khomeini, himself, said that a distinction should be made between Jews and Zionists. Now, it is publicly said that every Jew is a Zionist. The anti-Semitism diatribes broadcast during the Friday sermons on television no longer just talk about the Israelis or the Zionists. They talk about the Jews in general, about the worldwide Jewish plot, and how the Jews in Iran are all agents of this plot. This propaganda is not only limited to sermons. There are also hateful and comical Jewish characters in family radio programs, frequent newspaper articles, and so forth.

It was this suspicion and hatred of Jews in general, stirred up by the government, that caused my imprisonment. I was probably denounced by a fanatic coworker, and it was simply assumed that the accusation was valid because of this general atmosphere of hatred. I can see no other reason for it.

This anti-Jewish propaganda has become even more intense as the Arab-Israeli peace process is gaining momentum. The Iranian Government seems to want its Jewish population to suffer for the progress made in this regard. This increase in anti-Semitism activity is also related to the deteriorating economic conditions, where the Jews are being blamed for the destruction of Iran.

The Jewish community is being gradually excluded from any possibility of further existence in Iran. Jews having jobs or businesses live in constant fear of being forced to convert or of losing their jobs or livelihood. After I was released from prison, there was no possibility for me to work, since it was forbidden for any company having government contracts to hire Jews. In a country like Iran, almost every major company involved in industry depends on government contracts. It is now almost impossible for Jews to obtain trade or import licenses. Religion must be stated on all job applications, and now most employers will not hire Jews. Even if they have no anti-Semitic feelings themselves, they are afraid of the results of having a Jewish employee.

Established Jews are forced to survive through bribes, allowing themselves to be regularly victimized. They still, however, are helpless when it comes to their children. Jewish children are regularly abused in school. They must take part in anti-Israel and anti-USA demonstrations. Jewish children are given the lowest priority in being admitted to public schools, and are frequently forced to attend school far away from their homes on the pretext that the

schools in their district are full. The children have limited educational possibilities and almost no job possibilities.

Given this hopeless situation, you could well ask why the 25,000 Jews still in Iran don't all leave. First, it is difficult for Jews to obtain passports in Iran. A Muslim receives a passport within 24 hours, but there is a special passport office for Jews, where Jews are presented with very many forms and delaying tactics. In addition, frequently, members of a family must surrender their passports to assure that others will return, or only a part of a family is given a passport in the first place.

If a Jew does manage to leave, he is practically forced to abandon his material goods. If he sells his property to a Muslim, he will receive only a fraction of its value. And even that little amount is impossible to take out of the country. Moreover, if the government learns that a property is being sold for the purpose of emigration, there is a danger of its being confiscated. If property is given over to Jewish relatives or friends, it will eventually be confiscated, and friends and relatives placed on the black list, prohibiting them from traveling abroad, even if they have a passport. Therefore, there is almost no choice for a Jew but to abandon the property to government confiscation.

Mr. Chairman, I have tried to paint an accurate picture of what happened to me in Iran and the difficult situation of the Jewish people in that country. My testimony is based upon either what happened to me directly or what I saw happening to other Jews. I have avoided giving any information obtained by hearsay, not only because I feel it out of place in such a context, but also because I was, frankly, not in a position to hear much. For my last several years in Iran, I was either in prison or under close surveillance that I did not dare to even discuss these issues with people who were not very close to me. There are, therefore, areas of life in which Jews are persecuted that I learned only after I left that country, since through my specific situation, these problems did not touch me in Iran. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Abkazian appears in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, very much, Mr. Tilles. I appreciate your testimony and your willingness to jump in at the last moment.

Mr. TILLES. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

Mr. TILLES. May I make a personal remark?

Mr. SMITH. Please do.

Mr. TILLES. I would be remiss if I didn't say to you, on behalf of not only all of us in this room, all of the witnesses you heard, but Jews throughout the world and persecuted minorities throughout the world, to say thank you, not only for holding this hearing, but for your remarks just before I spoke. There's a marvelous Yiddish word called "kvell," and it means you swell with pride. As I heard you speaking about refugee Jews, I swelled with pride. On behalf of all of us, I thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Thankfully, the support for Soviet Jewry, Russian Jewry, and persecuted Jews, whether they be in Iran or

anywhere else, is very strong in this Congress. And, hopefully, as the true situation gets through to the media—which tends to say things are going well in Russia, things are going well elsewhere—it will dispel this regrettable euphoria that has come about as a result of the Berlin Wall falling and communism seemingly dissipating. Communism is being replaced in some places by a nationalism and a post-Communist mentality that may ultimately be as dangerous as the first. I think we need to be vigilant, to do everything we can to correct this myopic view that everything is OK and all will be well if we just establish a trading relationship with them.

I do have a few questions. And I thank you for your comment very, very much. Dr. Stonov, you might want to speak to this; Tatyana, you might want to respond as well: How would you assess the Russian Jewish Congress meeting in Moscow, the first publication of the Talmud? I mentioned that statement by the New York Times, the December 3rd edition, which all of us, I think, read and wondered what Russia was talking about; like somehow things were evolving and getting better, when reports and the first-person accounts that I am reading seem to indicate that it is getting worse? How would you assess that, and what should our government be doing? What is it doing right and what is it doing wrong, especially relating to our refugee policy and some of the changes that are being contemplated? Dr. Stonov.

Dr. STONOV. You know, I think there should be two steps to combat anti-Semitism—decrease anti-Semitism and to save Jews. First of all, my point is that the door for the United States—I think it should be widely opened for Jewish refugees all over the world, and especially from the territory of the former Soviet Union. I support that the amendment should be prolonged a minimum of 2 years. And it's very important to continue the refugee process. That's the first.

The second, of course, some Jews will stay in Russia and other countries. It's why I think that the United States, as well as most democratic countries, should help Russian Democrats and human rights activists to create an infrastructure of human rights organizations, because it's ridiculous that Fascist forces are united while democratic small groups are absolutely devoured. And what is most important, sometimes they have absolutely no financial capability to create infrastructure to publish newspapers and so on.

That's why I think that through AID, or some other organizations, the United States should help small groups to organize a democratic movement over the former Soviet Union. And if now, the United States will invest maybe several million dollars, they will save billions on arms. If the situation continues like now, it will be cold war and, maybe, unfortunately, real war. Back in the former Soviet Union, now, there are several points of civil war conflicts, like in Tajikistan, in Moldova, and especially in Chechnya Republic where combat to fight anti-Semitism is one of the most important tasks of democratic forces in Russia because Democrats absolutely realize the need to combat anti-Semitism, while at the same time to struggle with all kinds of xenophobia, and protect not only Jews, but protect all the members of the society.

Mr. SMITH. Do you think it is perhaps time to reassess the mission of the National Endowment for Democracy?

Dr. STONOV. Yes, because I know the funds are now cut and to my mind, it's absolutely a mistake. And, of course, the New York Times responded to—for example, Jewish Congress in Moscow. Yes, it happened, but it means unfortunately nothing. It's only like a screen, like something for the foreigners.

Ms. POLANSKAYA. Yes, I completely agree with what my colleague said and I would like to say that this whole Russian-Jewish Congress, all the committees there, all the declarations they made, it was only on paper. And it doesn't actually, in reality, affect the individual person or defending that individual person's rights.

I think the real key to helping Jews in Russia has to be in giving people at least a chance to hope that they can change their life for the better and that they can live as free citizens and free human beings. Otherwise, they might be condemned to being either tortured or killed or expelled, otherwise. And I'd like to say, and this is my personal opinion, but I think that the authorities, the government is silently in agreement with all of these anti-Semitism groups. Because if all these laws that are in existence were put into action, we wouldn't have the dire situation that we do today. Because what's important is actions and not words. And, unfortunately, the laws are not put into action. The courts do not examine such cases.

Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. How do you explain the fact that Zhirinovsky's top functionary is at least nominally Jewish and claims to be active in the Russian-Jewish reform movement? Is this the harbinger of anti-Zionist committees such as we saw during the heyday of the Communist regime? Dr. Stonov.

Dr. STONOV. No. In Russia, there are no such definitions like here. It is so-called self-hatred Jew. But, he's really not Jewish because he's half Jewish. And all his life, he was afraid to be Jewish and he has a complex of restoring his dignity by humiliating Jews. So, he is a real Fascist and this has happened very often. And, unfortunately, Zhirinovsky uses all this anti-Semitic rhetoric and he is a very skilled person, by the way. He knows how to speak with the crowd, how to speak with simple people, and he uses all the difficulties in their life. So, you know, he is a very skilled player and he is absolutely a product of anti-Semitic, anti-Israeli, anti-Zionist propaganda.

But, I don't know if you know or not, but the Liberal Democratic Party, of course you know, was created by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union by Gorbachev, as some first alternative to the Communist Party. And in 1988, the Soviet authorities decided to organize an organization of court Jews, then a Jewish public organization, and placed Zhirinovsky. It's very interesting—and for maybe 2, 3 months, he tried to create such an organization. But when authorities decided to change their mind, this organization never was created. But, maybe he wanted to create organization contrary to anti-Zionist committee, because anti-Zionist committee was absolutely shameful organization and nobody believed its propaganda. So, Zhirinovsky is a worse party. But, maybe now, he became more independent, a little bit more independent.

But, it is still a very big threat to democracy and especially to Jewish people because his party is absolutely a Fascist, anti-Semitic party.

Ms. POLANSKAYA. I would like to add a few words, if it is possible. When Zhirinovsky was asked about his nationality, he said, "My mother is Russian and my father is a lawyer." And he does not want to acknowledge himself as being a Jew and he's the biggest, at least, official, anti-Semite in Russia. I'd like to just tell a very small story to illustrate.

It's interesting because during the Stalin regime, there was a person that was very high up in the Stalin Government. His name was Lazar Kaganovitch. He was, of course, Jewish and he did not hide the fact that he was Jewish. However, he was the biggest anti-Semite in the whole country and it was in his head that the seeds were planted for the plan of the destruction of the Jews that Stalin was trying to plan at the time.

Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Ms. Kagan, the U.S. embassy in Tashkent put out a report in January 1996 and it said this, and I would like to quote it very briefly, "The Government of Uzbekistan officially supports religious tolerance and promotes mutual understanding. Observations and interviews indicate that Jewish rights and religious practice are respected and that neither legal or social persecution of Jews has survived the fall of the Soviet Union." Do you agree with that assessment?

Ms. KAGAN. Well, the organization where I worked and where the whole story took place that I told you about, there are a lot of people working there that are very high up in the government that are the idealogues and writers and the President—including the President's advisors, and you can judge for yourself. This story is about what happened to me, and what was done to me was done by these people. So what the President says and what he does are two very different things. The East is a very subtle and complicated place because people do one thing, they say one thing, they do another, and they think still another.

Dr. STONOV. And I would like to add, maybe because of Uzbekistan, you know that during a year-and-a-half, it was two anti-Jewish criminal cases, two Jews—Joseph Koinov and Dmitry Fattakhov—falsely accused. And only because of high pressure from American Government, Congress, and grassroots organizations, they were released. It was hundreds, thousands, of letters and dozens of letters from Senators and Congressmen on behalf of these people. And it was typical two anti-Jewish cases. And one even was accused that he killed one Uzbek man and used blood for religious reasons. So it's typical, you know, old fascism, and anti-Semitism.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Tilles, maybe you can answer this, and we tried to grapple with this at our recent hearing on persecution of Christians. My understanding of Islam is that at its core there is really no animosity toward Judaism at its core or Christianity. It is a religious belief or set of beliefs that, in its purest form, does practice tolerance. And, yet, as we have heard from Islamic scholars who have so testified, the extremists have perverted the true meaning

of Islam into something completely different, an aberration of its rightful form.

How can we, as a government, send the message to places like Iran and even Saudi Arabia, which practices intolerance in a very serious way, that it is the extremism that we are opposed to, not Islam? We want tolerance for Islam; we want tolerance for Judaism; we want tolerance for Christianity; we want tolerance for people to practice their faith as they see fit. How can we send that message to these Islamic States, especially a place like Iran where extremism runs rampant?

Mr. TILLES. From what I have seen and what I have heard, unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, I don't know how we can send that message. Sanctions against countries, cutting trade, that may be a way to send messages. But when you read testimony like this about Iran and know that it is just because they are practicing a different religion that they are being persecuted, and when you see many of the things that are happening throughout the Muslim world, in and of itself, it, like all religions, has its ideals, but it's how we practice them that they become perverted. And people have taken Islam and taken the Muslim religion and perverted it and made it hate others.

And how do we deal with hate? Mr. Chairman, I don't really know. I remember as a young man in Baltimore, Maryland being called a "dirty Jew" by my neighbor. How do we stop that? And I am sure it's happened to my children. It happened to my grandchildren and it will happen to my great grandchildren. I really don't know how we can take religion, which is probably one of the great movements in the whole world, any religion, and have seen it perverted and bastardized to hate other people. How do we take hate out of the hearts of people? We're seeing it in Bosnia. We're seeing it all through Yugoslavia. We're seeing hate and much of the hate, unfortunately, revolves around religion.

Mr. Chairman, I have searched for an answer to your question for many years and I don't know the answer. Those of us in this country can sanction others, but I'm not sure that that will do it. We have seen members of our own American community flying around the world catering to those who are fomenting hate. I understand there's a hearing in Congress right now about one such person from our country. I wish I had an answer for you, sir.

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

Dr. STONOV. I wanted to add one thing about hatred, that a Russian Orthodox Church was absolutely all the time a church of the KGB. That's why the Russian Orthodox Church abroad, here in the United States, was very respectful. And now, it opens divisions in the former Soviet Union and people, of course, want to join it. But a few people here know that the Russian Orthodox Church abroad is also a big source of anti-Semitism.

And it is shameful story and I would like to mention it here because altogether, we should know it and do something because they spread the hatred, not only inside the United States, but also outside the United States. So, it's a very important point.

Mr. SMITH. One final question: apart from human rights activists and people of conscience within Russia, where else does support for Jews in the former Soviet Union come from? Has the Duma been

weakened with the most recent election? We know that at least one person who spoke here earlier today was defeated. Perhaps that played a part in her defeat as a member of the Duma. As you know, Yeltsin certainly has not distinguished himself in this regard, nor in a lot of other areas with regard to human rights. Where does the fire wall of protection for Jews—where does it come from, if not from churches? As you indicated, for example, the Russian Orthodox Church has not distinguished itself.

Dr. STONOV. But, of course, there are some democratic very small forces like Sergei Kovalev, some of us who are Democrats and, of course, who struggled and struggled over time against anti-Semitism. But, I think what is very important is the pressure from all kinds of authorities from the United States. Because all the time, even people who are in the cage of anti-American spirit, are afraid to spoil relations with the American Congress, with American Government, and even with American grassroots organizations.

It's very strange then—I know American businessmen met Zyugonov in Geneva at some kind of economic forum, and listened to him, where he said, "Oh, Zyuganov is a Social Democrat because he said trade and Western investment will be continued even if he's elected as President of Russia." Here, people, and it's very good, believe what politicians say. But, we, who are from the former Soviet Union before, and those who arrived just now, we know that they're words and we know the big difference between words and this.

And I think that the United States is the greatest country and its policy should be like the ruler of the world, where policy should be liberal; but at the same time, very, very strong. I know that not all people here praise President Reagan. But, we, in the former Soviet Union, praised him because he was the first president of the United States who knew how to speak to Soviets. He knew what they loved. So, it should be, excuse me, but it should be a condemnation of power in the normal sense. And I think it's quite possible now.

Mr. TILLES. My friend is saying speak softly, but carry a big stick. Some of the Western democracies, particularly in Europe, have opened their doors to Soviet Jews. And we are in a great paradox: many Soviet Jews are going to Germany.

One of the things that concerns me, sir, is some of the bills that are floating around now, your Namesake's bill and Senator Simpson's bill, will send the wrong message to those countries. If we, the great America, cut back on the numbers of immigrants and refugees that we'll take, I'm afraid that this will spread like a cancer to some of the other Western democracies.

Mr. SMITH. I would agree. And just for the record, I am working very hard and plan on working hard on the floor when the immigration bill comes up to try to separate the idea of illegal immigration from legal immigration.

Mr. TILLES. And I thank you, sir.

Mr. SMITH. I mean, for our country to say that we do not have room is an insult.

Dr. STONOV. And I would like to add something; I think that the quota should be safe for the Soviet Jews, something like not less than 25,000 a year. It's normal quota. And Russian immigration is

one of the most successful immigrations here. So, it is not trouble for economy or the social life in the United States. It's high-educated people and I think these newspapers, some articles about the Russian mafia are absolutely exaggerated things. So, we know of your efforts to save the quota for legal immigrants.

Mr. SMITH. We are also moving to try to extend the Lautenberg category.

Dr. STONOV. Thank you very much for it. It's very important.

Mr. SMITH. And I think we may succeed on that.

I want to thank you very, very much for your expert testimony. We will disseminate this information as widely as we can—particularly to key members who are in decisionmaking positions in the Senate and the House—as soon as this hearing record becomes available, which will be as quickly as we can turn it around. It has been most helpful. Your presentations are very timely, because, you know, the whole thrust these days is that everything is fine. People keep painting a Potemkin village as to what is happening in the former Soviet Union. But I think circumstances are dire and you have made that case very, very compellingly.

Thank you, very much.

[Whereupon, at 5:29 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]

APPENDIX

STATEMENT

presented to the

House Committee on International Relations
Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights

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February 27, 1996

Russian society and politics are moving decisively away from the West and reform in the months preceding that nation's pivotal presidential elections. Even if President Boris Yeltsin is successful in winning a second term, his policy shifts and radical personnel changes have made his government increasingly indistinguishable from Gennadii Ziuganov's Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF). Russia has moved into a post-reform era where the choices are between a resurgent Communist Party or an ex-communist whose behavior casts him in the best tradition of Moscow's autocratic tsars. The internal changes which inevitably accompany such a shift only add more dark colors onto the somber portrait of a society that is struggling to emerge from a debilitating economic reform and psychically devastating civil war in Chechnya.

The impact of this change is already visible among the community of Russian scholars visiting the Kennan Institute. Some scholars at the Institute, for example, have expressed concern for the consequences that may befall them for having pursued their studies in America, thereby becoming too closely, perhaps fatally, affiliated with the West. Indeed, these individuals are overlooked heroes of Russia's reforms, as they have placed their professional and personal future in jeopardy for the opportunity to acquire new knowledge through contact with the West. Sadly, foreigners have also felt the return of the coercive institutions and practices of the old Russia. On a recent visit to the Republic of Karelia, for example, I was distressed to learn that a number of my interviewees there had subsequently been "visited" by members of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB), one of the bureaucracies that replaced the Soviet KGB.

These events foretell a harsher future for Russia than Western reform had anticipated, reinforced by an economic picture that reflects Moscow's prosperity as the rest of the country is marginalized. The capitol basks in an economic boom and an abundance of foreign products even as Russian regions struggle to survive. Farmers in Krasnodar Krai face an uncertain future as their traditional domestic markets have been inundated by Western products or cut off by a disintegrating transport infrastructure. Similarly, Karelians in the far north have had to endure bone-chilling cold as the republic is unable to raise sufficient revenues to pay for its heating bills. After four years of reform, Russia is an economically and politically divided society, worn done to the point that individuals are driven by elemental desires for the simplest of goals: a warm apartment, a stable job, or a livable wage. Tragically, these basics of life are now

farther off for many Russians than they have ever been. In these circumstances, the commitment to core values of civil society is eroded, replaced instead by a nostalgia for the communist past.

This assessment runs counter to the happier scenarios that have depicted Russia as "on track" toward the creation of a successful democracy in the wake of parliamentary elections. The problem stems from the exclusive attention Americans focus on procedural, rather than substantive issues. Americans like nothing better than a "good" (i.e., well run) election, as the defining characteristic of a functioning democracy. But this often obscures our ability to assess the values embedded within the society that is emerging. From a substantive perspective developments in Russia are sobering; for they point to political and social disequilibria that will place far greater strains on democratic institutions than has yet been the case, and will present the west with a much different political climate than in recent years. And should the CPRF emerge victorious in forthcoming presidential elections, few Russian observers doubt that existing democratic procedures will long survive.

What follows is a brief analysis of the key factors accounting for Russia's return to its authoritarian past.[1] These include: the growing economic divide between Moscow and the regions; the persistence of byzantine politics within a murky central state structure; and, the new political parties and tendencies that are challenging the Yeltsin government for power. A final section is devoted to reflecting on the impact of these factors in the growth of a more inhospitable and intolerant environment in post-Soviet Russia.

The Economic Marginalization of Regional Russia

Russian analysts are accustomed to thinking of Russian power in terms of Kremlin court politics but the 1995 parliamentary elections indicate this perspective is overdue for revision. Russia's regions have used the elections to send a strong rejectionist message to the central government. The ballot indicates that, although Moscow remains a world apart from the rest of the country, regional electorates are no longer willing to tolerate the historic primacy of Muscovy. Ironically, democracy has worked in the regions by permitting them to send a strong anti-Western and anti-reform delegation to Moscow to speak for the vast majority of the population. This exposes the Moscow-regional divide as a major source of social instability and public discontent, for future central governments must now choose between continued support for reforms or the suppression of regional opposition.

This presents Russia with a painful choice: either the center continues reforms at the expense of regional opposition, or regional demands must be accommodated into government policy. The first option necessarily entails the abandonment--even suppression--of democracy; while the second will effectively terminate economic reform. Even worse, a Communist (or fascist)

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[1]The following is an abbreviated analysis of that which appears in the author's "Russia After the Elections: Democracy or Parliamentary Byzantium?", Problems of Post-Communism (March/April 1996), pp. 13-20.

victory in the near future may succeed in ending both the political and economic dimensions of the reform interlude. The absence of any means of regulating disputes between center and periphery also makes it unlikely that easy solutions are in the offing. The central government has recently entered into a series of "treaties" with various republics, but in the absence of the rule of law, there is little guarantee that such agreements will be honored.

Agreements with numerous provinces, on the other hand, have more the character of arrangements for individual fiefdoms of key officials in the Yeltsin government: Sverdlovsk oblast (Boris Yeltsin's base), Orenburg oblast (Viktor Chernomyrdin); Krasnodar krai (Nikolai Yegorov); and Kaliningrad oblast (Vladimir Shumeiko), have all benefited by the presence of a powerful benefactor in the central government, rather than an institutional framework for devolving power. Consequently, when the government changes, the favored oblasts can be expected to change as well. If anything, this underscores the highly personalistic nature of regional politics, a fact that risks catalyzing the politics of envy and resentment.

Beyond these few privileged provinces, it is clear that the new regional assertiveness draws its strength from the growing economic gulf that separates a prosperous center from an increasingly impoverished periphery. According to data compiled by the Analytical Administration of the Russian President, average income in Moscow in July 1995 was more than three times higher than that of Russians living outside of Moscow's Ring Road.[2] More significantly, average per capita income was below what the Analytical Center deemed necessary to maintain a "subsistence" income in 68 of Russia's 89 component jurisdictions. Only eleven of the 79 regions for which data was available--a bare 12% of the Federation--had an individual per capita monthly income that exceeded "subsistence" levels. Within this select group, only five had average per capita incomes at least ten per cent above the minimum. In Moscow that figure was a stunning 243% above the subsistence amount.

These figures square with the sobering findings that the disparity between the richest and poorest provinces in the Russian Federation has increased more than five-fold between 1992 and 1994. That more than three-quarters of all financial transactions occur in Moscow--reflecting the extreme concentration of Russia's capital assets--only reinforces this picture of regional demise.[3] Democracy has given voice to the demand for a regional distribution of economic resources (essential for a sustained economic recovery), but the transfer of wealth continues to move in the opposite direction, that is, toward Moscow.

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[2]Data in this section are taken from: Rossiiskie regiony nakanune vyborov--95, Analiticheskoe upravlenie Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Moscow: Iuridicheskaia Literatura, 1995), passim.

[3]Stefan Hedlund and Niclas Sundstrom, "The Russian Economy after Systemic Change," Working Paper #22, Department of East European Studies, Uppsala University, November 1995, p. 17.

Apparently Russia has done little more than substitute the imperative of building socialism in one country with the goal of building capitalism in one city. Analysts who have argued that Russia is now a "normal" society fail to appreciate that normality--and stability--are elusive in a society where prosperity is not spreading beyond one city. With less than 6% of the Russian population, Moscow's status as an enclave of affluence in a landscape of despair was negatively reflected in the ballots cast by Russia's overwhelmingly regional electorate.

The emerging gap between Moscow and the rest of Russia provides the West important lessons for understanding the future development of Russia. First, the continuing popularity of non-Moscow based political parties and personalities in Russian parliamentary elections reflects a rejection of Moscow's success at expense of the regional electorate. The Communists are perhaps the only truly organized political force outside of Moscow, and much of the support for "nationalists," whether Vladimir Zhirinovskii's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) or Aleksandr Lebed's Congress of Russian Communities (KRO), derives from beyond the Ring Road.

Second, it should be clear that the thrust of regional demands will lead toward the end of reform policies as we have come to understand them. Provincial elites, like the publics that support them, place principal concern on stimulating productivity and improving standards of living, rather than the more intangible macroeconomic achievements of low inflation and zero budget deficits. Equally, the western slant of such policies--as well as the people who promote them--has become a dangerous liability. Once prominent reformers such as Gaidar and Boris Fyodorov, for example--nearly all of whom know London, Paris, New York, and Washington better than Ekaterinburg, Krasnodar, Karelia, or Khabarovsk--are disappearing from view.

Finally, the electoral results reflect a profound disappointment with the efforts of Western assistance. And why not? The narrow Muscovite vision of western aid agencies reinforced the historic role of Moscow, a city that drains the independence and economic promise of the regions for its own gain. For assistance to have any hope of proving valuable, Western aid officials need to leave the comfortable environments of Moscow's five-star hotels and develop regional contacts that will reduce the capitol's stranglehold on economic wealth.

Political Realities of the Russian State: Byzantium Endures

If Russia were a "normal" country, parliamentary elections would be followed by a period of coalition-building, and the creation of a new government that adopted policies reflective of public sentiment. Russia is anything but normal, however, for Yeltsin occupies a presidency constitutionally endowed with powers sufficient to win virtually every political battle with the new parliament. President Yeltsin has emulated the best of his tsarist and communist predecessors, by doling out political appointments to mollify key sectors of the political elite. For their part, Russia's new politicians, like the boyars and Central Committee members that preceded them, have embraced these elections as a prelude to the court politics that determines who shall win access to key ministries.

The endless maneuvering among the leaders of various political blocs and parties following the elections underscore a central ambiguity in contemporary Russian politics: Have we witnessed a decisive breakthrough toward civil society, or simply the evolution of an intricate parliamentary byzantium? The latter is more nearly the case, yet even this minimal achievement may be undermined by the deteriorating economic conditions throughout Russia. Electoral institutions are at best a thick skin covering a core of Kremlin-style politics that has remained relatively unchanged. The present Russian system resembles the "onion-like" nature of the Soviet totalitarian system described by Hannah Arendt:[4] an outer layer of electoral politics which, when removed, reveals another, more significant layer of elite alliances and bureaucratic interests. Layer follows upon layer until arriving at the nucleus of the Soviet system: a complex of post-KGB security agencies and key bureaucracies linked to key political elites, the emerging economic class, and the criminal underworld; all of which is suspended in an institutional slurry of inter-linked ministries, enterprises and (often nebulous) "non-governmental" organizations.

In this setting, Yeltsin, aided by the peculiar Russian willingness to tolerate a leader who shuffles and reshuffles the deck, is master of the game--assuming his health holds out. Democratic elections may have taken root, but Russia remains incapable of replacing the only mechanism for elite circulation it has ever known in the twentieth century--the purge. Indeed, the Russian president has already begun a kind of new age chistka, clearing out ministries and the presidential apparat to create the patronage appointments necessary to accommodate key members of the new parliamentary majority. Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, First Deputy Prime Minister Anatolii Chubais, Chief of Staff Sergei Filatov, the ministries of transportation and agriculture, and others have been banished, as Yeltsin responds to the national mood of opposition to reform and the West. In doing so however, the President strengthens the hands of those among the Russian elite supportive of a return to politics a la russe.[5]

Arendt's metaphor should not be taken too far, for electoral politics and the emergence of powerful economic forces have thickened the outer skin of the Russian political system and made it more difficult to cast aside. Nevertheless, elections, rather than becoming the ultima ratio of Russian politics, are instead another means by which political elites--whether through popularity or organizational prowess--gain entry to the rarefied atmosphere of Kremlin politics. And they are a desirable (if not indispensable) ingredient in the amalgam of votes, elite alliances, economic and bureaucratic interests that Yeltsin--or any other president--must create to remain in power. The great Kremlin game remains that of forming intricate political alliances with little regard to public sentiment. The fluidity and opportunism of these high-level alliances reflect the

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[4]Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951).

[5] Unlike the Soviet past, however, purge victims are neither physically or politically eliminated but are moved to newly-created positions in an expanding presidential administration. Alternatively, more enterprising individuals--Gaidar, Mikhail Gorbachev, Gennadii Burbulis, to name a few--turn to the wealth of resources western foundations have to offer to create their research institutes.

relative poverty of democratic culture in Russia--at both mass and elite levels.

Russian electoral politics therefore remain exceptionally fragile, weakened further by the declining economic fortunes of much of the population. Thus far, all parties to the contest of political succession have abided by the rules of electoral politics, but there is no guarantee that any particular faction--especially in Yeltsin's entourage--seeing the game turn against it, will not attempt to violate or dispense with the rules. The image of a blackened White House is fixed in the mind of every Russian who ponders the prospect of a political confrontation between president and parliament.

Russia Moves Away from Reform and the West

The constitutionally mandated 5% threshold on the party list vote to gain representation in the State Duma has served perhaps too well in reducing the crowded field of parties and blocs competing for seats. In 1993, eight parties surmounted the 5% barrier, providing the opportunity for 87% of the electorate to make meaningful use of the party lists. In 1995, by contrast, nearly half of voters wound up wasting their party list votes. Of the ten biggest winners in the most recent ballot, only four parties captured more than the 5% minimum, for a combined total of 50.5% of the vote. In other words, 49.5% of the Russian electorate was effectively disenfranchised in party list voting. This considerable drop from 1993 raises the question as to how long Russian (or any other) voters can be counted on to support an electoral process from which they derive little benefit.

Despite President Boris Yeltsin's last minute appeal to voters to shun it, Gennadii Ziuganov's Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) garnered the largest share of the party list vote, capturing 22.30% of ballots cast, higher than most opinion polls prior to 17 December had predicted. More surprising, however, was the party's strong showing in single-candidate districts, where it captured 58 seats, leaving the CPRF with a parliamentary delegation of 157. The Agrarian Party, country cousins of the CPRF, received only 3.78% of the vote in 1995, down substantially from its 7.99% in 1993. Nevertheless, Agrarians won in 20 single-candidate races, assuring them a healthy representation in the new parliament. The most worrisome outcome from the Western perspective was the unexpectedly strong showing of the Communists-Working Russia Party, the hardline, unreconstructed communists who, at 4.53% of the party list vote were the sixth-most popular party in the country.

In sum, communist parties could hardly have hoped for a better outcome from the December ballot: three of the top ten parties--the CPRF, Agrarians, and Working Russia--were communist and their combined popular vote on party lists was 30.61%. It is unlikely that this constellation of communist parties will collaborate in parliament, but the fact that nearly one-third of the Russian electorate voluntarily cast their ballot for some brand of communist organization--producing a parliamentary delegation of at least 178 communist deputies--is impressive.

The biggest surprise, however, came from the so-called "nationalist" parties, as the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) did far better than expected, evidently at the expense of the

Congress of Russian Communities (KRO). The pre-election popularity of former Lieutenant-General Aleksandr Lebed' has not yet translated into substantial support for KRO; while Zhirinovskii--discounted as too clownish to be taken seriously in a field of other nationalist/protest parties--retained sufficient popularity among the armed forces and the general public to take second in the party list voting. A further indicator that the LDPR is principally a national protest party is also reflected in its poor showing in single-candidate races, where it succeeded in winning only one seat, one of the poorest showings of any major party. Apparently, the LDPR has little staying power at the regional level of Russian politics, a fact that bodes ill for its continued success.

The KRO's failure to surpass the 5% barrier is harder to explain than is Zhirinovskii's success, but several factors bear mention. First, Lebed' is immensely popular and will likely attract greater support as a presidential candidate. But Lebed's political views remain vague, with the exception of views on the need for order: it is still not clear what kind of economic policy he would pursue, and this the central issue for many Russians. In addition, the presence of the enigmatic Yurii Skokov on the KRO team has done little to help its public profile. Skokov, at one time a key Yeltsin aide, is the consummate insider whose value lies in helping KRO navigate treacherous Kremlin shoals. KRO's electoral defeat may have made it difficult for Skokov to make use of his talents.

This large communist and protest vote derives its strength principally from popular dissatisfaction with four years of reform that have left most ordinary Russians materially worse off than in the past. But there is more to this result than protest: Russia is undergoing a painful process of self-definition and, rather than blithely dispensing with its past and embracing Western-imposed reform, Russian society is seeking to distill the valuable elements of its twentieth-century experience and integrate it into a new identity.[6]

One of the fundamental substantive questions that has been largely answered by the December parliamentary elections is the relative strength of the various political tendencies that have tugged at Russia since the beginning of reforms in 1992. At the core of Russian concern are two key issues that have defined the political spectrum: the course of economic reform, and Russia's relation to the West. Unquestionably, the big winners in the 1995 elections were the anti-reform and anti-Western political parties. The CPRF, LDPR, Working Russia, KRO and Agrarians may differ in the details, but all share the same basic position that Russia's reform has cut too deeply into society and the country is better off relying less on the West. More than forty-six percent of the electorate agreed with them. By contrast, pro-Western and pro-reform parties saw their support drop dramatically, as fewer than one in nine Russians (10.75%) cast their ballots in favor of reform-orientated parties.

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[6]For an analysis of what the Communist Party's success means to Russians, see: Aleksandr Tsipko, "In Russia, A New Kind of Moral Majority," The Washington Post, December 24, 1995, pp. C1, 2.

The various anti-western policies cannot be so easily lumped together when it comes to the question of ethnic relations, however. The most dangerous from this perspective is the LDPR, which still remains a possible contender for the presidential elections in June. There is little doubt that Zhirinovskii will undertake repressive, ethnically-based policies should he have the opportunity to do so. Ziuganov's CPRF is more difficult to determine, though the more radical communist parties will likely find it easy to embrace ethnically-divisive themes. The only unknown among the nationalists--and it is an interesting one--remains Lebed'. The former Lieutenant General of the Red Army has acquired a strong negative reputation among many nationalities of the former Soviet Union for his role as chief suppressor, and his endorsement of strong support for the Russian diaspora in the former Soviet republics has also troubled many. On the other hand, however, Lebed' remained virtually the lone candidate in the nationalist camp who did not base his campaign explicitly on ethnic themes. Similarly, his views on economic policy never had the chance to mature during the electoral campaign. His candidacy for president should not be discounted at this point, particular as he may be the only option for Russia to follow the path of an authoritarianism that does not embrace ethnic division and discrimination.

Two final points bear mention. First, while Western attention--as well as the present analysis--has focused primarily on leading personalities, it is the behavior of the rank-and-file that plays a decisive role in the evolution of future Russian politics. Whatever we might say about Ziuganov's potential as a leader and his likely policies must be tempered by the reality that his popular base of support remains far more aggressive than he himself is. Consequently, there is a great danger that his rhetorical statements, intended perhaps solely for effect, will be taken literally by an electorate than will then hold him accountable following the elections. The same can be said of Zhirinovskii as well. The implications of this are clear: the standard view that Russian politicians' more outlandish statements will quickly be tempered by the responsibilities of leadership must be balanced with an appreciation of the fact that the nationalist/communist electoral base may prove too demanding to resist. It is this internal tension, more than anything else, which may lead to a far more intolerant Russia than we presently see.

The second point is really a question: If Russia moves toward the pole of intolerance, which ethnic groups will bear the brunt of discrimination and injustice? The evidence clearly points to peoples of Caucasian origin as the principal focus of any official or unofficial policy of ethnic repression. Indeed, the edicts of the Mayor of Moscow in 1994 which targeted people of "caucasian nationality" for search and possible eviction from Moscow were precursors of what could follow.[7] A November 1995 survey of 4,000 Moscow residents further confirmed this trend. While 39% of respondents expressed anti-Jewish sentiment, a startling 88%--nearly nine in ten people--expressed hostility to people from the Caucasian region. This is undoubtedly a

[7]I was in Russia at this time and had the opportunity to experience this firsthand, being stopped and questioned by security forces and militia on three separate occasions. I drew little consolation from the bitter realization that I could minimize such arbitrary inspections by standing behind someone whose complexion was darker than my own.

result of the continuing war in Chechnya and the subsequent seizure of Russian hostages by Chechen rebels. People of "caucasian nationality"--the term is typically defined by a quick and crude assessment of an individual's facial features--are the first-order internal "enemies" in the minds of many Russians today. No politician can avoid realizing the implications this has for sustaining their own domestic popularity.

Final Thoughts on the "New" Russia

Russia is entering a post-reform period which will likely be characterized by a more authoritarian government which may be accompanied by greater intolerance toward ethnic minorities. If so, Caucasian peoples will be first in line to feel the brunt of any such change in policy. More importantly, the factors I have alluded to are largely beyond the control of any individual or set of government institutions to control, hence **all** parties to the contest of political succession will feel the pressure to find scapegoats and claim these to be the "real" reason behind Russia's problems. If a cohesive and rational government existed in Moscow the outcome might be different, but such is not the case for now or the foreseeable future.

I have never and will never believe that the Russian people are inherently anti-Caucasian, anti-semitic, or anti- any other ethnic group. However, as an analyst I can appreciate that a population that has been subjected to war and humiliation; declining life expectancy and wages below minimum subsistence levels; a currency that is one ten-thousandth its value of five years ago; and other tragedies will soon seek to vent its frustration on the easiest targets. This is the situation for many Russians today, and their desperation can only be redressed by attacking the root causes of the socioeconomic nightmare that has befallen Russia. For when the Caucasian peoples cease being the focus of anger, Russia's unresolved dynamic of despair will move on to some other ethnic group. My view is that this will not take the form of open violence by Russians--expect perhaps in isolated instances--rather, the depressing conditions in the life of the average Russian will make injustice easier to tolerate. This can still be changed, but only through policies that restore a sense of hope in the Russian population that there really is life after communism. Russian leaders and Western reformers have yet to meet this challenge.

ANTI-SEMITISM ON THE RISE IN THE POST-SOVIET STATES

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Testimony prepared for a hearing of
the House Committee on International Relations
Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights
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The threat of anti-semitism in the post-Soviet states is greater today than it has been at any time in the last decade. The inability of the governments to enforce their own laws or follow up on their own promises, the worsening economic situation throughout the region that is leading to a search for scapegoats, and an increasing number of politicians and officials who see anti-semitism as a useful tool to advance their causes all contribute to this threat. Unfortunately, many in the West have failed to see this threat because it takes a form so different from that which we faced in Soviet times. Even more tragically, some Western governments--including our own--have taken steps which unintentionally make the situation worse.

Three years ago, I testified before this committee that there were three reasons that we needed to revise the way in which we measured the amount of anti-semitism in the post-Soviet states.[1] First, there are now fifteen countries, not one, a change that requires us to consider each of them in our assessments of the level of anti-semitism in the post-Soviet environment. Second, virtually all of these countries are experiencing extreme social and economic dislocations, the historical seedbed for anti-semitism in this part of the world. And third, and most important, anti-semitism has been privatized; that is, governments do not effectively control the manifestation of this ancient evil, and consequently, government declarations and the number of anti-semitic articles in the press are no longer a good indicator of just how

[1]"The Privatization of an Ancient Evil: Anti-Semitism in the Post-Soviet States," Testimony Prepared for the House Subcommittee on International Security, International Organizations and Human Rights," June 15, 1993. A copy of my testimony at that time is appended here.

much anti-semitism there is in any particular place. In Soviet times, we could be fairly confident that the level of anti-semitism in the USSR would closely track government policy and the government-controlled media. That is no longer true.

All three of these observations remain true today. Indeed, in many of the countries of the region, the ability of the political authorities to control the situation is less than it was in 1993. With few exceptions, governments are unable to pay their militaries or police on a regular basis, cannot enforce existing legislation or treaty requirements, and frequently must stand idly by as powerful criminal bodies or the population behaves atrociously toward traditionally despised groups. And quite often, the central authorities in these states can do little to ensure that local officials actually obey the rules of the game. Indeed, local officials are often implicated by Jewish groups as being behind the activities of the population.[2]

This presents the US and other governments with a problem. In the past, it was possible to praise or damn the Soviet regime concerning anti-semitism depending on what the government said. Now the governments in this region may say all the right things, some may even try to do the right things, but few of them are in a position to guarantee that what their laws say and what their promises are have been enforced. Obviously, our government, like any other, is generally unwilling to criticize a foreign state if the government of that state is saying what we want to hear and if that government is important to us for other reasons. Consequently, we have been reluctant to condemn or even identify the problems in some of these countries lest we undermine regimes we hope will move in the right direction.

This problem is compounded by the economic and social dislocations that virtually all 15 of the post-Soviet states are experiencing. Most are in deep recession economically, many are experiencing social traumas of kinds we cannot imagine, and even basic demographic indicators are frightening. Just one indication of this is the following: In Russia, life expectancy for males has dropped by almost a decade in the last decade, something that has never happened before to a country in times of peace. Given these

[2] See among others the reports of the Union of Councils, February 2, 1996, in its submission to the State Department for possible inclusion in the annual US Government human rights survey.

challenges, it is not surprising that interethnic and interconfessional hostilities are on the rise. When times are good or improving, people tend to look with confidence on themselves and with sympathy to others; when times are bad or getting worse, most people tend to blame others and to see all other groups as dangerous competitors. Given the inheritance of Soviet-sponsored ethnicity throughout the region, many people in this region are inclined to blame others and especially ethnically and religiously differentiated others for their problems.

With rare exceptions--the Sepharidic Jews of the Caucasus and Central Asia and the Jewish community of Estonia--Jews have been a traditional object of distrust and hatred in this region. At times, the governments of the region have fought this, but now, despite almost universal promises to do good and to conform to international norms, these governments find themselves unable and in some cases unwilling to oppose this ugly form of popular anger.

And third, precisely because anti-semitism is now so widespread and blatant, many politicians especially in the Russian Federation but elsewhere as well are exploiting it as they seek to take power. The second largest political party in Russia, for example, is headed by the openly anti-semitic Vladimir Zhirinovsky; and the largest party, the Communists, contain many people who played the anti-semitic card in the past. Most distressing of all, the Russian government now has a foreign minister who openly consorted with the worst and most anti-Israel politicians in the Middle East, a pattern of behaviour that few Jews in the region can ignore. President Yeltsin is clearly prepared to use such implicit anti-semitism to try to win support for his own reelection--whatever he says to us through diplomatic channels.

Unfortunately, we have been sending him and all other leaders in the region a message that such behaviour makes sense. In October 1993, the US refused to criticize Yeltsin and his government when they expelled "persons of Caucasian nationality" from Moscow after Yeltsin's conflict with the Russian parliament. Our failure to say anything was justified in the name of not doing anything to undermine Yeltsin and reflected an American willingness to believe the worst about Muslim groups, but the Administration's failure to speak out then has had three important consequences:

--First, it has led the governments of the region to conclude that the US will tolerate virtually anything including blatant racism if it is done by those with whom we want to deal, thus removing one of our most important levers on good behaviour in that region.

--Second, it has politicians of all kinds to conclude that treating people not according to their individual merits but rather because they are members of a particular ethnic group is something the international community will tolerate.

--And third, it has sent a message to the Jews of Russia that they could be next. After all, the only previous occasion when Moscow used an analogous expression was in 1952 when Stalin attacked "persons of Jewish nationality."

Obviously, no one in our government thought he was opening the way to anti-semitism, but that has been the unfortunate if unintended consequence of our silence.

Now, the Administration is urging that the Lautenberg Amendment not be extended beyond September 30. Obviously, Washington hopes to send a message that Yeltsin and Russian democracy are doing well--and also that we will be tougher about immigration--but this is the wrong message at the wrong time. Yeltsin is no longer a democrat, and Russian democracy is not doing well. One indication of that: the current issue of US News and World Report features an article on "The Creeping Return of the Soviet System." In it, Russian human rights pioneer Aleksandr Podrabinek says that he thinks "it's time" to renew his column on Soviet political prisoners, a column he had discontinued six years ago for lack of a subject. And once the government of Russia begins to identify political prisoners, all past history suggests that Jews will be especially numerous among them.

We can ignore that judgment only at our peril, and for our sakes as well as those of both the more than one million Jews and all the other citizens of the former Soviet states, we must remember that Pastor Neimuller's observation remains just as valid now as it was in the 1930s.

THE PRIVATIZATION OF AN ANCIENT EVIL: ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE POST-SOVIET STATES

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Testimony prepared for the U.S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on International Security, International Organizations and Human Rights.
June 15, 1993

At the end of last year, an El Al jet landed in the Tajik capital of Dushanbe to pick up more than 200 Jews who wanted to emigrate to Israel. When the plane arrived, the Jews themselves were in an airport building which itself was under the control and protection of the Tajik government, while the airplane was naturally under the control of Israeli officials. But as the Jews moved from the airport building to the plane, a group of local bandits surrounded them in order to steal whatever goods the Jews were carrying. The Tajik officials were outgunned, and as a result, neither they nor the Israeli air crew was able to prevent this last outrage.

In many ways, this event serves as a symbol of the new situation Jews face in the former Soviet republics: On the one hand, the opportunities of Jews both to develop as a community or to leave are far greater than they were under the Soviets. On the other, the new governments--while generally respecting the rights of Jews--are often too weak to block effectively the actions of anti-semites and their allies, both of whom have new opportunities for action as well. As a result, Jews in many of the new countries face a new kind of threat, one that is at least as dangerous as those in Soviet times and, in some cases, potentially even worse.

Unfortunately, this threat has often gone unrecognized because many in the West continue to try to track anti-semitism in the region the way they have always done:

examining the press for attacks on Jews and Israel and assuming that the intensity of such attacks represent a reliable barometer of public action. In Soviet times, when the authorities were in virtually total control of the media and when they used the press to push regime policies, that was a reasonable approach. Now, it is no longer appropriate, for while the number of anti-semitic articles has increased dramatically, that fact no longer reflects government policy so much as the new opportunities for all groups to use the media to advance their agendas.

In short, anti-semitism has been privatized, shifted from primarily a question of state policy to one of private actions, from an issue of what the government will do to the Jews to one of whether any of the governments will be able to protect them in the face of still-strong anti-semitic attitudes in many parts of the population. And the continued use of our old methodology in this new environment is likely to result in a situation where we will highlight one set of problems but miss another far more fundamental and threatening group of them.

In my remarks, I would like to make three points as a contribution toward the development of an understanding of the new kinds of dangers anti-semitism presents in the post-Soviet environment. First, I would like to highlight the extent to which the new regimes have moved in various degrees to eliminate the worst forms of Soviet anti-semitism. Second, I want to suggest where I think the worst problems lie, both now and in the near future. And third, I want to argue that the United States must adopt a new approach to the problem of anti-semitism in the post-Soviet states, one that recognizes what the new governments and the newly-freed populations are capable.

The Good, the Bad and the Indifferent

Like all other groups, Jews have both benefitted and suffered as the result of the end of the Soviet system.

They have benefitted because the new freedoms that are generally available throughout the region give them enormous opportunities they did not have. They have suffered both because others, including anti-semitic groups, now have equal freedom to act and because they like all residents of this region are suffering through the difficult transitions from dictatorship to democracy and free markets. This basic fact often gets lost in Western discussions of anti-semitism in the new post-Soviet states.

Three other even more important facts get lost as well. First, while there is an enormous variety of state policies toward Jews throughout the region and while many general policies of these states have often negative consequences for Jews, the new regimes have generally received high marks from Western human rights monitors for their officially-stated policies.3 Pressed by the United States and other governments to sign the Helsinki Final Act and to subscribe to other international conventions, these regimes have done so and--with some exceptions--have at least on paper done the right thing.

Second, these regimes are in all cases extremely weak and consequently are not in a position to enforce their own laws. The opening up of the press to all groups has allowed many extremely unsavory people to speak out, and the general inability of the regimes to control such utterances, combined with the absence of public understanding of how the press has changed, often has sent the wrong message to the population. Many former Soviet citizens and as I have suggested already still read the press as if it represented official policy, when in fact a newspaper like Den' or some of the other extremist and anti-semitic tracts are just as marginal in those societies as they would be elsewhere in the world.

And third, these new regimes have not yet recognized how weak they are vis-a-vis these social forces and hence not moved toward an active program of education against

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?? See, for example, CSCE Staff, Human Rights and Democratization in the Newly Independent States of the Former Soviet Union, Washington, D.C., January 1993.

evils such as anti-semitism. Their general failure to do so--and we should remember that there are some happy exceptions, particularly in the Baltic states and the former Western republics--has contributed to a situation in which more and more people are finding anti-semitism if not attractive, at least acceptable. And that poses a serious near-term and even greater long-term threat.

Areas of Greatest Danger

Not unimportantly, the areas of greatest danger for Jews are not the places of traditional Jewish settlement but rather in places where Jews are already small in number and where anti-semitism is less about actual Jews than about more generalized social protest and anger. The three most dangerous areas of an outburst are in Cossack settlements around the edge of the former Soviet Union, in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and in Russia itself, where economic decline is already fuelling a powerful anti-semitic movement.

The return of the cossacks--and Boris Yeltsin's pandering to them before the April 25 referendum--is especially distressing since much of their ideology is infused with anti-semitism. Located throughout the territory of the former Soviet Union, these groups have refused to accept the demise of the USSR and blame Jews and other groups for all current difficulties. (It is worth noting that in the words of some of their leaders, virtually everyone in the world is a "Jew" and thus the designation loses some of its meaning.) These groups have already participated in violence in Moldova and in Kazakhstan and unless they are put under tight control they can be expected to commit other outrages.4

The situation of Jews in Central Asia and the Caucasus is especially risky. While not numerous, they are subject

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?? Obviously, not all Cossacks are anti-semitic, but the statements of the Cossack leadership which can be characterized as such have not been disowned by many in the rank and file.

to a double pressure. On the one hand, Russians and other European groups are all too willing to throw the Jews overboard to protect their own, now threatened positions in these predominantly Muslim areas. On the other, many in the local population--while traditionally not anti-semitic--are all too willing to lump the Jews with the Russians and to put pressure on them as such. European Jews, like all other Europeans, have no future in these regions, because the local population views them as pieds noirs whatever the host governments may say.

But it is in Russia itself that the danger is greatest. The explosion in mass participation in political life and the rapidly deteriorating economic situation have combined to fuel anti-semitic movements of various kinds. As everyone knows, the vicious anti-semite Vladimir Zhirinovskiy won a large fraction of the vote in the last presidential elections and would likely win even more votes in the future. Anti-semitic newspapers and television programs are an increasing feature of the streets of Moscow and other cities. And speakers in the parliament and even in the government routinely say things that give support to popular anti-semitism, despite the top leadership's commitment to the protection of Jewish rights. At present, the situation is only threatening; in the coming months, it is likely to be explosive.

What Must We Do?

In this situation, we must go beyond the celebration of the end of communism, the easy assumption that things will work out for the best throughout this troubled region, and recognize that popular anti-semitism is on the rise even though the governments have given us assurances and passed laws that in most cases are quite good. What should we do? I would argue for three things:

--First, we must insist on good behavior, by maintaining a heavy monitoring presence throughout the region and calling the governments to account when they behave badly. Thus, we should have spoken out as a government when Yeltsin backed the cossacks and when the Tajik bandits attacked the Jews in Dushanbe.

--Second, we should move beyond our simple confidence that if these countries make the economic transition, all will be well. Not only will such a transition take time, during which many will suffer, but it will not solve this or many other problems. We need to support institution building in the broadest sense: the construction of courts and police forces to make sure that laws are enforced, the development of media training so that outrageous statements will be countered and marginalized, and the elaboration of educational programs so that no one will be able to exploit anti-semitism to the point of creating a fascist dictatorship.

--And third, we should push for emigration, not only to Israel but to the United States as well. Unfortunately, in the new age of mass politics, mass anti-semitism is going to emerge, and the best way out is for Jews who want to leave. Many who do not want to go to Israel for various reasons would be delighted to come to the United States. Despite recent decisions which point in another direction, we are a country where Emma Lazarus' poem is still relevant and should be the basis of policy.

If we do these three things, not only will we help prevent a new rise in anti-semitism, but we will be building a better future for all the peoples of the planet--including ourselves.

TESTIMONY AT THE US CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON ANTI-SEMITIISM

Respected Members of the United States Congress:

Back in October '93, in the days of armed confrontation between progressive and reactionary forces that brought Russia on the brink of civil war, I saw several young men in black shirts with a stylized swastika on their sleeves marching down the streets of Moscow. They were on their way to join other members of the fascist "Russian National Unity" in their assault on democracy in Russia.

In those days, people stopped and looked in surprise. Today, such a scene would surprise no one: in the last two years, "Russian National Unity" became a well-organized and well-known political party. Among the more popular pronouncements of its leader, Aleksandr Barkashov, is: "The Jews, as well as the Gypsies, will be exterminated in the near future". He also proposed to adopt in Russia a new law modeled after the law of the Third Reich: "Mixed marriages and sexual alliances harming the genetics of the Russian nation shall be subject to criminal prosecution".

Barkashov seriously contemplated running for presidency of Russia. Recognizing, however, that it would be more effective to back an ideologically-compatible candidate with a wider name recognition, Barkashov declared that in the elections he will support comrade Gennady Zyuganov, the leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation.

Although Zyuganov does not openly say or write: "Kill the Jews", there is a number of other politicians appealing "for total deportation of Jews from Russia", or "for a halt to the Kike propaganda", or "for not letting the Jew George Soros into the country" (leaflets and letters with such "appeals" could be periodically found in my internal mail tray at the Duma).

In an effort to become a fatherly figure for the country, Zyuganov tries to cast himself as an ideologue concerned with the "revitalization of the nation's spiritual health". In his 1995 book "Beyond the Horizon", Zyuganov writes: "...As no one else, Stalin understood the acute need to coordinate new reality with centuries-old Russian tradition... The result of this understanding was his 'ideological restructuring' of 1944-55"... If he had lived for a few more years, Stalin would have made his 'ideological restructuring' irreversible".

What was this "ideological restructuring" so much admired by comrade Zyuganov?

Following the end of World War II and with the Soviet Union in a deep economic crisis, Stalin had to find a recognizable internal enemy to be blamed for everything and in 1948 began an active campaign against "rootless cosmopolites" - the Jews of the USSR.

At first, Stalin's' henchmen arrested Jewish writers, actors, engineers, among them my own father. Many of the arrested were executed or died in the camps. As the campaign gained momentum, it became clear to its designer that the enemy

had to be an easy-to-identify target dangerous to common man. Hence, a widely publicized case against Jewish doctors who allegedly tried to poison the leaders of the USSR and "were preventing the victorious country from becoming healthy and strong".

Stalin's campaign succeeded. Common people *were* full of hatred and rage: I still vividly remember women from my street beating up Uncle Aaron, the neighborhood pharmacist. The historians tell us that the campaign was to culminate in a public hanging of a Jewish doctor on the Red Square - to be followed by the deportation of all Jews to Siberia "to protect them from justifiable rage".

This is the "ideological restructuring" praised by Zyuganov, the leader of the largest faction in the current State Duma and a likely next President of Russia.

Today, there are about 250 openly fascist, pro-fascist, nazi, national-socialist and similar periodicals published in Russia, as well as scores of anti-Semitic books and brochures. These publications are openly distributed throughout the country, including the State Duma, put free-of-charge into the mail boxes, delivered to government offices, factories and universities. Although, as a rule the run of these publications is not very large, they are extremely dangerous nevertheless: in the time of ideological and economic crisis, the seeds of vile propaganda they contain fall on very fertile ground.

Anti-Semitic propaganda is not limited to small-print publications. A number of prominent writers and journalists publishing in main-stream journals and magazines also propagate the ideas of extreme nationalism and anti-Semitism: "proportionate representation", "Jewish threat", "Zionist-Masonic conspiracy" and even ritual murders.

The spread of anti-Semitic propaganda throughout Russia is facilitated by the reactionary circles of Russian Orthodox Church. Some of the clergy and church officials are active in nationalistic and fascist organizations, i.e. the late Archbishop Ioann of St. Petersburg was literally the soul and the moving force for all national-socialist and openly fascist organizations in that city.

In a country with a strong historic tradition of anti-Semitism, its modern adepts find a receptive audience and active support in government offices, law-enforcement agencies, the military and, of course, among the disenchanted population, especially the young. Around Russia, in addition to a number of formal and informal fascist and nationalist political parties and groups, there are numerous paramilitary "patriotic" clubs and organizations where young people are indoctrinated into establishing "the Russian order" in the country. Such groups often use a salute with a raised arm and a swastika-like symbol but instead of "Heil Hitler" yell "Glory to Russia".

The spread of fascism and the onslaught of open anti-Semitism and inter-ethnic hatred continue unchallenged throughout the county because in the last few years Russia has not developed an effective set of laws to stop them. At the same time, relevant existing legislative documents, as imperfect as they may be, are not effectively enforced.

The recently-dismissed spokesman for the Federal Security Bureau (FSB), major-general Aleksandr Mikhailov, admitted publicly that the adoption by the last Duma of a tough new anti-fascist law "was checked by the followers of Zyuganov and Zhirinovsky". The general also aired another "heretical" idea: by their inaction Russia's public prosecutors and law-enforcement agencies are trying to protect themselves in case the national-socialists come to power.

Russia's Criminal Code does contain several articles that could be applied to fight fascism and anti-Semitism, e.g. Article 74 against "the excitement of inter-ethnic hatred" punishable by up to 10 years of imprisonment. However, in the last five years, this article was effectively applied only once against one of the leaders of "Pamyat" Society, Ostashvili.

The efforts to bring legal charges against anti-Semitic publication usually fail, e.g. an attempt of the Jewish WWII veterans' organization to sue "The Young Guard" magazine that frequently publishes anti-Semitic articles. In a few instances when public prosecutors initiated criminal proceedings against fascists and anti-Semites, the cases were either routinely dismissed by the courts or, if the perpetrator was actually brought to trial and convicted, he was allowed to go free. A fascist periodical would soon re-appear, sometimes under a different name.

The efforts to challenge Russia's fascists and extreme nationalists also usually fail, e.g. a year ago in St. Petersburg, a vicious anti-Semitic organization named "The Russian Squad" held a rally where one of its leader appealed to the crowd: "We are struggling and struggle means violence. As we struggle, our hand is tightening into a fist, so a weapon could easily be put into it". An attempt by the local pro-democracy organizations to take these fascists to court did not lead anywhere. At the time of this incident, I was in St. Petersburg on official Duma business. In response to my inquiry, the city's public prosecutor's office replied: "There is no reason for concern. As far as we know, the group has not yet started any active measures." Soon after the meeting, 70 tombstones at a St. Petersburg's Jewish cemetery were vandalized, and the police could not find the offenders.

Regrettably, this is not an isolated case in a singular city. Throughout the country, those responsible for Anti-Semitic propaganda and calls to violence against Jews remain free and are allowed to continue.

Aleksei Batogov, the publisher of an anti-Semitic periodical, was appointed a consultant to the State Duma. The editor of "The Pulse of Silence" newspaper who promised to knife me to death in my own apartment is enjoying his freedom - the criminal case against him was dismissed. E. Vorobyev, the admitted fascist who does not find anything objectionable in "gaining power through blood", was sentenced to imprisonment but received an immediate probation. Also free is the leader of the Black Hundred fascist organization in the City of Zlatoust ("for me to kill a Kike is like to swat a mosquito").

Yuri Belyaev, the leader of National Republican Party in St. Petersburg was sentenced to a year in prison but the execution of the sentence was postponed indefinitely. Belyaev, a blood-thirsty anti-Semite, was freed right in the courtroom to the cheers of his followers. Today, in response to calls for unity of all patriotic forces, Belyaev supports Zyuganov's candidacy in the presidential race.

The aforementioned Aleksandr Barkashov, the furer of "Russian National Unity" and, possibly, the most dangerous of Russia's fascists, also continues his activities unchallenged.

It is important to note that today in Russia anti-Semitism is walking hand-in-hand with anti-American and, generally, anti-Western sentiment.

In the words of Gennady Zyuganov: "The Jewish influence continues to grow. Traditionally, the Jewish diaspora controls the continent's financial life. As its 'market' develops, the Jewish diaspora becomes, in a way, a 'majority stock holder' of the Western civilization's entire financial and commercial system". Further, Zyuganov points out that Western civilization is incompatible with traditional Russian values.

This quote from Zyuganov was cheerfully published by "The Russian Nationalist", a viciously anti-Semitic newspaper. Today, the nationalists and the fascists look at Zyuganov with excitement and hope that he will be the one who will "expel the merchants and the money changers from the temple of Russia" and "deliver the country from the Jews and into their hands".

In conclusion I would like to note that in the past the cause of human rights, particularly the right of Soviet Jews to emigrate or to live in freedom and dignity in the country of their birth, were staunchly supported by the United States Congress. Hundreds of thousands of Jews in the former Soviet Union, as well as those who in the last two decades came to Israel and the United States, will be eternally grateful for this support.

Today, the former Soviet republics are struggling on their road into the future. For Russia, this is a difficult and treacherous road, and the visible gains of the last few years in the area of human rights are by no means permanent and irreversible.

Thus, I urge you to continue this support and to look beyond the often superficial media reports covering the most visible and/or positive events taking place in Russia. The dark and ominous tendencies in today's Russia are as real and prominent, albeit less apparent. The growth in recent years of extreme nationalism and fascism, the spread of anti-Jewish propaganda and lack of effective legal measures to stop them continue to raise the fear of persecution among the Jews of Russia.

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February 27, 1996
Washington, DC

TESTIMONY AT THE US CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON ANTI-SEMITIISM

Respected Members of the United States Congress, ladies and gentlemen:

It is an honor for me to address these hearings and to share some of the concerns that, in my view, are of particular importance in Russia's modern political contexts.

First, however, I would like to clarify in what capacity I am speaking here today.

Since 1993, I have served as the Deputy Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights under the President of the RF. However, my position is somewhat ambiguous: on February 7, after the Commission passed its Report on the State of Human Rights in the Russian Federation in 1994-95 and sent it to the President, I and four other members of the Commission also sent to the President our letters of resignation. Until now, there has been no official Presidential Decree accepting our resignations. Consequently, although formally I remain a member of the Commission, I would like to note that I speak here in a non-official capacity.

At the same time, I express here not only my own opinion but also the opinion of all the members of the Commission. Its Report on the State of Human Rights in the RF that I have mentioned earlier contains a special chapter on nationalistic and political extremism that, to a certain extent, serves as a basis for my remarks.

The Commission views nationalistic and political extremism in Russia as a serious threat to human rights and freedoms in the county. Specifically,

the report notes that in 1994-95 discrimination, racial and ethnic prejudice, xenophobia and anti-Semitism have spread around the country to such an extent that they began to influence the country's social life, and the government had to pay attention.

On November 29, 1994 the threat of fascism and political extremism was discussed by the Presidential Expert and Analytical Council. In February 1995, the State Duma held parliamentary hearings on this issue. The President of the RF issued the Decree "On measures to insure coordinated activities of government agencies in combating fascism and other forms of political extremism in the Russian Federation".

According to the Presidential Expert and Analytical Council, in 1995 there were about 90 organizations that could be qualified as extremist. Many of these organizations rapidly develop into formal political parties.

There is a real threat (in some cases, it has already materialized) that these extremist organizations and their ideas penetrate Russia's trade unions, businesses, the armed forces and law enforcement agencies and spread quickly among migrants, workers and students.

There are about 150 periodicals that propagate the ideas of fascism, extreme nationalism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. In 1992-95, the number of such publications has tripled.

In this regard, the Judicial Chamber Under the President of the RF on Informational Disputes (a special quasi-judicial body formed to protect freedom of speech and information, including protection from abuse) took several special decisions and noted that some media regularly disseminated information propagating social and ethnic intolerance and hatred. Among such publications are not only small-print newspapers published by extremist and fascist political parties but also the communist newspaper "Tomorrow"

(formerly published as "The Day"), as well as major journals with national circulation, e.g. "Young Guard", "Our Contemporary" and others.

Published en masse are books, brochures and leaflets with nationalist and fascist content, often printed by the government-owned presses, including those belonging to the RF Ministry of Defense.

This dirty wave contains a pronounced anti-Semitic stream. This is particularly dangerous because anti-Semitism is a potent weapon in the political arsenal of leaders and parties playing a serious role in today's political process. I will quote from just two political leaders well-known around the world.

In his book "Beyond the Horizon, Mr. Zyuganov, the leader of Russia's communists, enlightens his readers about another "Zionist conquest" of the Western world, this time by the Jews of Russia: "The West's world view, culture and ideology are influenced more and more by the Jewish Diaspora. Its influence grows continuously... As its 'market' develops, the Jewish Diaspora becomes, in a way, a 'majority stock holder' of the Western civilization's entire financial and commercial system".

Here is what Mr. Zhirinovsky thinks is necessary to combat anti-Semitism: "For anti-Semitism to disappear, all Jews must move to Israel."

These are the words of political leaders whose parties have received the most votes in Russia's last parliamentary elections. I suppose, further comments are not necessary.

Acts of open and demonstrative anti-Semitism continue.

The August 23, 1994 letter from the Union of Jewish Invalids and War Veterans to the RF Prosecutor-General sighted facts of barbaric cemetery desecration, e.g. in one night, 147 Jewish tombstones were destroyed at the

cemetery in Nizhny Novgorod. Similar acts of vandalism took place in Moscow and St. Petersburg. There were cases of arson and explosions at the synagogues in Moscow and Rostov-on-Don.

At this point, I would like to emphasize that in today's Russia anti-Semitism does not constitute a government policy, as under the communist leaders, and the top authorities do not openly display it in their actions.

However, the report of the Commission specifically notes that the country's political leadership and the part of the executive branch charged with protecting the constitution and human rights underestimate the danger of nationalism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism and do not use their powers to a full extent.

Please note that the Russian model of freedom of speech is different from the super-liberal American model. The Constitution of the RF not only permits certain limitations of freedom of speech but insists on limiting it if it is abused and utilized to promote intolerance and hatred. Under current laws, such actions are subject to criminal prosecution. In reality, however, these laws are not implemented, e.g. Article 74 of the RF Criminal Code designed to punish actions enticing inter-ethnic and racial hatred. Alas, according to the RF Ministry of Justice, only one person was found guilty under this article in 1993, none in 1994 and one person was sentenced to a fine of US$187.00 in 1995.

The public prosecutors' offices and the courts do not find anything objectionable in the actions that directly promote fascism and militant anti-Semitism, nor see such actions as a threat to the society.

For example, "The Day", the newspaper with national circulation, wrote: "The Jews are not a nation but a sect of degenerates." In his official

response, Deputy Public Prosecutor for the City of Moscow noted that this statement did not contain anything insulting to the Jews.

In St. Petersburg, the court dismissed the case against the publisher/distributor of "Mein Kampf" and his own fascist writings. Similar decision was taken by the court in Moscow in the case against the editor of "Russian Rebirth", a newspaper that glorified Hitler and open anti-Semitism. At the same time, the court in the City of Volgograd ruled in favor of openly anti-Semitic weekly "Kolokol" (the Bell) against "The City News" newspaper that printed an article protesting against Kolokol's publications inflaming inter-ethnic hatred and anti-Semitism.

Given time, I could site many such examples.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize, once again, that:

1. Xenophobia and anti-Semitism in Russia are not just a reality but a growing and spreading reality.

2. These ideologies express themselves not only in an openly fascist form but also in the ideologies and activities of active political forces, first and foremost in the so-called "national patriotic movement" and in the activities of Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia.

3. Although there is no sufficient basis to accuse the top level of the government of anti-Semitism, its actions to combat intolerance, xenophobia and anti-Semitism are clearly insufficient and have little effect. It seems that the authorities underestimate their danger and the harm they cause.

4. Regrettably, there are serious reasons to believe that the problem of nationalist extremism and anti-Semitism will remain acute in the near future.

Thank you for your attention.

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February 27, 1996
Washington, D.C.

The Observance of Human and Civil Rights in the Russian Federation for 1994-1995.

Report of
the Human Rights Commission
under the President of Russia.

Adopted by the Commission
at the 5-th of February 1996.

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INTRODUCTION

This Report on the Observance of Human and Civil Rights in the Russian Federation for 1994-1995 was prepared in compliance with Russian Federation President's Resolution on the Commission for Human Rights, confirmed by a Decree of the President dated November 8, 1993. It continues the tradition established by the 1993 Report.

This Report takes into account analyses, proposals and obligations contained in the Russian President's addresses to the Federal Assembly for 1994 and 1995, in the Agreement on Civic Accord, and in the 1993 Report on the Observance of Human and Civil Rights in the Russian Federation.

The Commission notes with regret that the findings and proposals made in the 1993 Report have not elicited official reaction and have been virtually disregarded, although the text of the Report was officially sent to the government offices competent to resolve the matters raised in the Report.

Some section of this report are relatively brief and contain references to the 1993 Report either because the state of affairs with respect to a given subject did not change significantly, or because it got worse, and the compilers of the Report would have been forced to repeat themselves.

As in 1993, this Report in no way clams to be a complete and exhaustive description of the human rights situation in the Russian Federation. It is fragmentary primarily because of the Commission's limited possibilities, which have been even further reduced by comparison to 1993.

Moreover, many important human rights problems in the Russian Federation are not reflected in the Report (or only minimally covered) because necessary information was lacking or was not made available. These include such current problems as unlawful invasion of citizens` privacy and

violation of secrecy of the mails and other means of commissions by state agencies and security services; ethnic and racial discrimination and discrimination against woman; harassment and abuse of citizen by policeman and Interior Ministry troops; and violation of the rights of the most vulnerable members of society — orphans, the mentally ill, the elderly, the institutionalized, and the disabled.

A relatively small place in the Report is devoted to an extremely important problem. The violation of citizens' social rights, although clearly, this is the area that gives rise to the most social tension and these violations affect the absolute majority of the population of the Russian Federation. The Commission's position in this regard is explained not by a failure to appreciate the significance of this area but by the fact that social problems are studied and analyzed by a whole range of other specialized government agencies, including a number of ministries and advisory bodies with incomparably greater resources than the Commission. It is from these agencies that we should expect findings and recommendations that can serve as the basis of government social policy.

The problem to be reviewed in this Report were selected because of their acute nature, because no proper study of the problem has been made by a government institution, or because the Commission disagreed with the government's findings. Thus the Commission recognizes that many of the findings contained in this Report are subjective.

Finally, there is one more difference from the 1993 Report. In the Conclusion of the 1994-1995 Report, the Commission has considered it possible to include several more general findings and observations, not only about the current human rights situation in Russia but also about the trends of the last three years.

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During January 1996, a number of Commission members resigned. Nevertheless, the conception, the general approach, the selection of issues and the findings in the Report reflect the common opinion of those person who were members of the Commission on January 1, 1996. In the opinion of the Commission, study of the situation over the last three years allows some generalizations to be made.

* * *

The 1994-1995 Report on the Observance of Human and Civil Rights in the Russian Federation issued by the Commission for Human Rights, which also covers the activity of the Commission, was compiled on the basis of an analysis of complaints and appeals filed by citizens and organizations as well as special investigations conducted by the Commission, press reports, and responses by government organizations to the Commission's queries.

The Commission would like to thank a number of Russian NGOs, including in particular the Human Rights Center of the Memorial Society, the Commission for Access to Information founded by the Glasnost Foundation and the Russian section of the Human Rights Project Group. Without their generous help in gathering and verifying information, including in conflict zones, some sections of this report could not have been prepared because of the Commission's severely limited capabilities and its small staff.

Materials issued by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch/Helsinki and similar international organizations also were used in compilation of this report.

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Finally, the Commission thanks its professional staff, including those persons who are no longer formally connected to the Commission, but who have continued their work on a pro bono basis. Without their help, this Report could not have been published.

6

CONCLUSION

Having reviewed the materials available to it, the President's Commission for Human Rights finds in necessary to declare that during 1994 and 1995, the human rights situation in the Russian Federation has remained extremely unsatisfactory.

The Commission notes that the provisions of the Russian Constitution concerning human rights and civil liberties remain largely rhetorical; they have not been backed by the force of law. Human rights legislation is developing slowly, with contradictions.

The severe economic crisis has caused the economic situation of the population to continue to worsen and with it, the actual level of citizens' social and economic rights.

The Commission is particularly concerned that in many aspects and political rights and liberties there has been a distinct retreat from democratic achievements. This can no longer be attributed to economic problems, or to other difficulties specifically related to the transition period.

Direct threats to human rights and freedoms and the civil peas needed to secure them have increased in our society. The Commission considers it necessary to note in particular:

1. The increasing militarization of society, expressed in the mushrooming of official and unofficial armed and militarized formations, and of special forces with poorly-defined function, purposes and chains of command.

The jurisdiction and powers of the security services are growing, and they are reverting to a Soviet model with a lack of civilian oversight and with secret budgets.

2. The use of force to resolve domestic affairs is violating one of the principles of the Agreement on Civil Accord, which prohibits the use of violence in any form to deal with problems arising in society. The bloody climax of this tendency has been the events in the Chechen Republic.

The armed conflict in Chechen Republic, waged without regard for legal restraints, has led to massive violations of human rights and humanitarian law by both sides. Russia in the past had sponsored detailed and strict regulation of internal armed conflicts in international humanitarian law, had proposed stiffer penalties for violators, and had insisted on international recognition of the thesis that the violation of human rights is not only a country's internal affair. Now, however, Russia has in fact egregiously retreated from the very principles it once asserted.

3. The aggravation of racial and ethnic intolerance and discrimination, sometimes involving high-ranking officials.

Fascist ideas are freely disseminated and extremist organizations are actively organizing then own militarized group and issuing publications. Political and nationalists extremism is not property condemned and resisted by government bodies charged with preventing extremism through the force of law.

4. The problem of safeguarding the rights of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples with small populations has become more acute. Despite some measures to institute legislative protection and special programs for them, the situation of the peoples of the North, far East, and Siberia in fact continues to worsen. Their populations are shrieking, and some ethnic groups with small populations are danger of disappearing.

5. The situation in the penal system, the Armed Forces, and other military units of the Russian Federation has grown worse. There are gaps in the regulations governing the rights of armed services personnel while performing their duties in various types of emergency situations, in particular in armed conflicts of both an international and non-international character.

6. Provision of the Constitution, international standards, and the law on freedom of movement and choice of residence are ignored. In a number of regions the resident permit [propiska] regiment is being tightened, and there have been attempts to criminalize infractions of this officially abolished institution. Restrictions on the right to freely choose one's residence entail violations of electoral law, the right to work, medical care, education, the acquisition of property, and so on. The resident permit system is being used as a mechanism to discriminate against ethnic minorities.

7. Forced migration continues to increase, aggravated by internal armed conflicts. The rights of refugees and forced migrants are not actually protected and their social adaptation is in fact hindered. A balanced policy with respect to migration has not been worked out.

8. The absence of transparency in government agencies, their increasing classification of information as secret, and the restriction of freedom of expression and access to current and archival information under the pretext of protecting state secrets.

The Commission is particularly disturbed by the misinformation by government and other official sources.

The government is isolating itself from society by inhibiting the free flow of information.

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9. Under the guise of fighting crime there is a tendency to expand the powers of security and law-enforcement agencies to the detriment of Constitutional rights and guarantees.

The number of human rights violations in the area of criminal justice is increasing. In 1994, more than 20,000 Interior Ministry employees were disciplined for breaking the law when conducting investigation and interrogation, and there is reason to believe that this figure seriously underestimates the real scale of violations. The number of persons charged with unlawful detention, the use of force against suspects and witnesses, and the falsifying of evidence and so on, has almost doubled.

10. The process of creating and strengthening a national system of government agencies to protect human rights had been halted. Some offices engaged in safeguarding human rights have closed.

The majority of the proposals for judicial reform have not been implemented and laws are passed which contradict the Conception of Judicial Reform. The existing judicial system is in critical condition; the failure to take effective measures to implement judicial reform may lead in the future to a virtual interruption of the dispensation of justice in our country.

* * *

The Commission notes that from 1993 through 1995, the state's evolution in the field of human rights clearly deviated from the direction of democracy, the rule of law, and social welfare.

The government is rapidly becoming more bureaucratic and estranged from society, and official play an expanding role even in implementing Constitutional guarantees of civil rights. Attempts to

expanding public oversight of the activity of government agencies encounter resistance and remain unsuccessful.

In Russia's domestic policy, political expediency takes precedence over fundamental principles of law and respect for human rights and dignity and even over the lives and safety of citizens.

The Commission once again emphasize that the trends and phenomena noted are inconsistent with the principles incorporated in the Russian Constitution and the international human rights agreements which Russia has ratified. The Commission finds this cause for grave concern.

TESTIMONY OF DR. GILBERT N. KAHN, PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, KEAN COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY, BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS, FEBRUARY 27, 1996

Mr. Chairman, my name is Gilbert N. Kahn, I am an associate professor of Political Science at Kean College of New Jersey, where I have been teaching as a full time faculty member for 26 years since, September 1970. It is great pleasure for me to appear before you today in conjunction with the additional testimony which your Subcommittee is receiving on the importance of United States human rights policy as a consideration for U.S. foreign policy in general and as part of U.S. immigration policy, in particular.

I should point out to the Committee that I am appearing here today not only because of my academic credentials and involvements, but, specifically, because I served for over three years--from November 1990 until March 1994--as a consultant to the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews. During that time, I was retained by a group of Syrian-American Jews most of whom live in Brooklyn, New York, but many of whom reside or also have homes in New Jersey. My task with the Council was to help develop what became the campaign to rescue the Jews of Syria.

Initially, I assisted them to organize themselves at the grassroots level, something that this particular group of American Jews had never really accomplished. In addition, working together with many of the established social service and advocacy agencies within the American Jewish community, many of which the Members of this committee are quite familiar, I designed and mounted for the Council a major campaign to educate the political leadership in the United States concerning the plight of the Jews of Syria. We sought to gain public awareness about the conditions facing the 4000 Jews who then were being held hostage in Syria. This campaign focused on the human rights violations occurring in Syria and the restrictions and constant fear of persecution facing the Jewish community in Syria. In particular, our effort focused on gaining the fundamental human right for all people, in this case for the hostage Jewish community, to travel as entire family units and/or to emigrate. Our hope had been that we might be able to arouse the conscience and concern of American leadership both within the Executive as well as the Legislative branches to gain their support in an effort to obtain the timely release of Syrian Jews.

As an American, I am very proud to say that we received an enthusiastic hearing from the highest officials of both the Bush as well as the Clinton Administrations. Members of both Administrations immediately added the concern for the plight of Syrian Jewry to their list of bi-lateral issues in discussions between the Governments of Syria and the United States. Despite a wide-range of major issues about which the U.S. Government was concerned with Syria, members of the State Department and the White House as well as all our Middle East negotiating teams consistently voiced the U.S. Government's persistent concern for the plight of Syria's Jewish community and the failure of President Hafez al-Assad to permit the Jews of Syria to travel. In light of the known consistent fear of persecution of Syrian Jews, this effort became a

key portion of U.S. bi-lateral discussions.

At the same time, we were extraordinarily impressed by the bi-partisan effort on behalf of Syrian Jewry carried forth here on Capitol Hill by Members of this very Committee, many of whose Members are still here, as well as by those who served on this Committee and on other key Committees at the time. The bi-partisan interest which this issue generated was equally enthusiastic in the Senate as well as in the House. The eagerness to help on this issue of Mr. Lantos, the former Chairman of the Human Rights Subcommittee, as well as Chairman Gilman, then the ranking Member of the Europe and Middle East Subcommittee, as well as numerous Members from both sides of the aisle were crucial throughout the campaign . Without their unceasing efforts to raise the issue of Syrian Jewry in all quarters and before all relevant witnesses before this and other Committees, there is no doubt in my mind that all our own personal commitment and desire would have come to nought. We will never be able to thank you all for your unqualified support.

It was due in large part to the sensitivity of the Congress to the plight of Syrian Jewry that the 4000 Jews of Syria were freed and permitted to obtain their fundamental human right to travel; to emigrate; to be re-united with their families in the United States and some, subsequently, even in Israel. Members of Congress championed this cause in their contacts with Syrian Government officials, as well as during their visits to Syria. The Assad Government grew to understand that Congress believed that Syria's Jews did have a well-founded fear of persecution in Syria and ought to be extended the fundamental human right to travel and/or to emigrate; without leaving behind members of their immediate families as hostages. President Assad understood that in the eyes of Congress this meant the right to travel without posting an enormous financial bond. Mr. Chairman, as we have frequently said to many of you previously in private, I am proud to say today again, in public, we salute your efforts to stand up for the fundamental values upon which we as an American nation were founded; that the United States should be a refuge for people who indeed are facing an immediate and constant fear from persecution from hostile Governments.

Permit me Mr. Chairman, to describe briefly for the Committee the conditions facing the Jews of Syria in 1991. The Jewish community in Syria dates back to the time of the prophets in Israel. It had a significant Jewish population during the days before Jesus walked the Holy Land. Throughout the generations, the Jews in Syria lived in a state of tension with various rulers, however, for the most part, they maintained a classic if not better than average living condition for Jews living in exile throughout the world. As late as the beginning of the 20th Century, there were over 40,000 Jews living in Syria; primarily in Damascus and Alleppo, with some living in the Turkish border town of Kamishli. More than half of that population emigrated to the United States and Western Europe during the early part of Twentieth Century. Eventually, some of them also went to Palestine.

Once Israel declared her independence in 1948, no Jews were permitted to leave the country. While initially their conditions were "tolerable", after the 1967 Six Day War, Jews began to fear for their lives. There were anti-Jewish demonstrations, attacks on Jewish synagogues, and

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indiscriminate round-ups of Jews, and persistent questioning of Jews concerning alleged "plots" to leave the country. Once President Assad gained power, Syria's Jews feared even more for their very lives. While there were no overt pogroms, Jews lived, indeed, in a constant state or fear of persecution. During each war or crisis between Syria and Israel there was a dramatic upsurge in hostility.

Syria's Jews lived primarily in a ghetto. They were under 24 hour surveillance by the Mukhabarat, the Syrian secret police. While they were permitted to practice their religion in the synagogues, they were not allowed to teach Hebrew as a language in the Jewish schools, only as a form of prayer. They were subjected to periodic, intermittent, and random searches, arrests, imprisonment , and torture without any legitimate charges. When they were told of charges, it usually related to efforts to express their Jewishness or because of alleged "discovered " plans to travel from Syria. Some of those imprisoned for trying to emigrate like the Swed brothers, Eli and Selim Swed, were incarcerated for years; were tortured; were not permitted family visitation; and went months without even being informed of the charges against them. Their only clear charge was the fact that they were Jewish.

Certainly, this committee understands very well, these people, living with this well founded fear of persecution, needed relief; needed the right to travel, to emigrate; fundamental human rights.

As you know, beginning in 1992 and continuing with "fits and starts" through 1993 and into 1994, President Assad began to let the Jews travel as entire families. While he permitted Syria's Jews to leave, they were forced to leave behind their homes, their possessions, and their valuables. Of the 4000 Jews living in Syria in 1991, I am pleased to report that all but approximately 250 Jews have left. Those remaining are there of their own free will. Initially, almost all the Jews who left Syria came directly to the United States, where such wonderful organizations as HIAS, (the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) and others helped to facilitate their introduction to America. Together with particular social welfare agencies within the Syrian Jewish community in America, these Jews were readily cared for and absorbed . By 1994, Syria began to permit Syrian Jews to emigrate to Israel, although still not directly. Today over half of the Jews who left Syria have gone on to Israel. The remaining group, staying in the United States is beginning to make a varied and impressive contribution to the life of this country, while integrating itself into our society.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, many charitable organizations come into existence each year with specific goals and aspirations. Few of these groups ever go out of business. Mr. Chairman, I am appearing today before you as the former consultant to the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews, because the Council accomplished its task, largely because of the strong pressure and active involvement of Members of Congress. Mr. Chairman, we accomplished our goal, and we, indeed, went out of business.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, it is a pleasure for me to be here today and to appear before you and I would be happy to answer any of your questions. Thank you.

Statement

of

Dr. Leonid Stonov

Former Refusenik,
Director of the Union of Councils' (UCSJ)
International Human Rights Bureaus in the FSU, and
President, American Association of Russian Jews

on

Anti-Semitism in the Former Soviet Union (FSU)

before the

Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights
Committee on International Relations
United States House of Representatives

February 27, 1996

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this great opportunity to speak inside this bulwark of democracy on the subject of present-day anti-Semitism in the former Soviet Union (FSU). My family and I have experienced Russian anti-Semitism first hand. My father was condemned and imprisoned in the gulag for being a Jewish writer. I, myself, was a refusenik and activist for more than ten years in Moscow. Since emigrating to the United States I have been impressed with many sides of American life. One feature in particular has struck me more and more. It inspires me how all the branches of authorities in America listen to grassroots opinion, how policy is corrected by public opinion, and how elected representatives communicate with people and organizations. The most recent example is the release of the Jewish boy Dmitrii Fattakhov from a Tashkent jail after being falsely accused of murder and terribly tortured in prison. The cooperation and pressure of the Congress and the State Department saved this life and led to his departure to Israel 20 days ago.

Today's hearing also shows the serious concern of Congress in the anti-Semitic manifestations in the FSU. As Director of the UCSJ's International Human Rights Bureaus in the FSU, I have daily contact with Jewish and human rights circles in many regions. I regularly visit many post-Soviet republics, and monitor anti-Semitism and inter-ethnic and inter-religious hatred. My personal and professional experience provides me with stories and other evidence of anti-Semitism across the entire region.

Of course, some positive changes have occurred in Jewish life during the last 7-8 years in the FSU. Many large obstacles to Jewish emigration were removed that allowed about a million people to emigrate. A few synagogues and yeshivas were opened in many big cities. Thousands of adults and children study Hebrew, Jewish history and tradition in big cities all over the FSU. The former Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk officially apologized to the Jews for anti-Semitism during Soviet era, including during World War II. Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov asked the Jews not to leave Russia during his address to the Russian Jewish Congress on January 9, 1996.

But at the same time, anti-Semitism is flourishing everywhere. Anti-Semitism has been "privatized" by the so-called "Red-Brown" Communist/Fascist forces, as well as on the streets and in the crowds. Anti-Semitism is still a part of the mentality of the governmental authorities and their structures. It is the ideology of many extremist, Communist and Fascist parties and movements, and is still alive in the Russian Orthodox Church and in some Moslem circles as well. The modern situation with anti-Semitism in the FSU, especially in Russia, can be described as a permanent artificially-maintained readiness for Jewish pogroms in a country with historically consolidated anti-Semitic traditions. This readiness is supported and encouraged by massive anti-Semitic propaganda on the right and left of the political spectrum and is not stopped by the authorities. The situation reminds me of pouring lighter fluid on a pile of twigs and waiting for a lit match. Because anti-Semites in the FSU "keep their gunpowder dry", democrats inside the FSU

and in the Western civilized world should permanently and vigilantly watch for their activity, as they failed to do in the 1930s in Weimar Germany.

Before I speak about current anti-Semitism I will first give a brief historical background. It is difficult to understand the modern situation with anti-Semitism without a quick historical and social overview. Beginning in the 1940s and 1950s, Stalin decided to implement Hitler's idea about a "final solution of the Jewish question" and Communist views were supplemented with the anti-Jewish component of the Nazi ideology. These anti-Semitic state policies included the murder of the Jewish leader Solomon Mikhoels in 1948; the execution of 13 members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in 1952; the arrest of the well-known Jewish doctors absurdly accused of the attempted assassination of Stalin in 1953; and the planned deportation of the Jewish people to Siberia and the Far East intended for March, 1953. The Soviet government suppressed Jewish life in all forms during the entire Soviet era - these evil deeds were only the visible tip of the anti-Semitic state policy iceberg. The anti-Semitic policy picked up new momentum during the Khrushchev-Brezhnev-Andropov-Chernenko eras.

The post-Soviet leaders, including Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, did not officially condemn the Soviet anti-Semitic policy, did not acknowledge genocidal anti-Jewish events occurred, and failed to publish documents about plans for a mass deportation. Of course, none of the perpetrators were punished, although many KGB and Communist Party butchers are still alive and even active. The KGB and Communist party were never brought to Nuremburg-like trials. The KGB and Communist deeply-rooted ideology adversely affected all post-Soviet development, including inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations, anti-Semitism and xenophobia.

Modern anti-Semitism exists in a context of the political, economic and deep social crisis of the post-Soviet society. The factors include the interweaving of official and criminal levels of society so that more and more instead of rule of law, society is dominated by a coalition of bureaucrats and the mafia. The sharp polarization of incomes dividing a tiny elite from mass poverty; and ocean waves of chauvinism, nationalism, and radicalism. The society has lost its bearings and historical memory. It can't find its morality. The souls of the majority are instilled with a slavery psychology, which insists on a "strong ruling hand."

We should not forget the climate of inter-ethnic conflict that exists across regions including: the bloody and terrible Chechen War; the imperialistic Russian and Uzbek behavior in Tadjikistan; the explosive situation in Dniestr and Crimea; and the smoldering but dangerous military conflicts in Abkhazia, Ossetia, Ingushetia, Nagorno-Karabakh and other regions.

But back to our central question: What type of anti-Semitic persecution and harassment do Jews face in the former Soviet Union? The current situation can best be understood by looking at three related categories of anti-Semitism: governmental, ideological, and "street" or grass-roots.

1. Governmental Anti-Semitism

The first type of anti-Semitism is also the oldest - governmental anti-Semitism. State and quasi-state anti-Semitism is alive in governmental departments, created by the new and old *nomenclatura* bureaucratic elite. This anti-Semitic policy is a conscious governmental tactic used as a tried-and-true remedy for channelling popular discontent. But listen to the following statements by officials and to the current facts. These events reflect common tendency of Red-Brown, Communist and Fascist forces to coalesce with officials.

Last month in January of 1996, supporters of Alexander Barkashov's fascist para-military Russian National Unity (RNU) organization held an extremely provocative demonstration in Orel, central Russia. Despite chants of "Death to Jews," local authorities at the time refused to intervene to protect Jews in this anti-Semitic demonstration, and the lack of intervention was confirmed as an official position by a press officer of the Orel City Government. At the same time, the official newspaper *Orlovskaya Pravda* published an article about the RNU that focused and elaborated on its "anti Jewish platform". The official newspaper explained that the RNU platform states that most conflicts result from a conspiracy of international Zionism; that at the center of Jewish ideology is the hatred of all non-Jews; that Jews control most of the financial capital of developed countries; and that a war is being mounted from the territory of the U.S. in order to destroy Russia.

Just after the events in Orel, Yegor Stroyev, the governor of Orel region, was elected not only as the chairman of the Council of Federations, the upper house of the Russian parliament, but also was elected chair of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Stroyev is not only connected to RNU but also to other fascist parties (General Alexander Sterligov's Fascist Russian National *Sobor* [Gathering]), and has a long history with the Communist Party including a position as the former Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU.

In another example of anti-Semitic politicians reaching very high positions, the Communist Gennady Seleznev was elected in January as the Duma chair. Two weeks before Seleznev, as editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Pravda*, had approved an article (January 2, 1996) where Jews are accused of controlling all the mass media in Russia. Recently publication of a book by President Boris Yeltsin's former press secretary, Vyacheslav Kostikov, was forbidden. Kostikov revealed in an interview two weeks ago that when the President's aides where shown anti-Yeltsin newspaper articles, they retorted that the authors were Jewish or the newspapers were Zionist. (The interview was on Sunday, February 11, 1996, in the evening program of Independent TV *Itogi* [Sum]).

Meanwhile, next to Russia in Belarus, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko praised Adolf Hitler for developing strong power in Germany before the Second World War in his interview with German newspaper *Handelsblatt* in November, 1995, which was broadcasted by Belorus Radio on the 23 of November, 1995. Lukashenko said that the strong German state power allowed the entire

nation to consolidate around Hitler and to raise Germany from the ruins. Lukashenko continued, "Such an approach corresponded to our understanding of the Republic and the Presidential role in it." Fortunately, Lukashenko added that during the Second World War, Hitler crossed out the good deeds he had done before.

Governmental anti-Semitism also manifested itself during the Soviet period in quotas for Jews in universities and jobs. Although the situation has improved, many of the old Soviet era bureaucrats are still in place. At the most prestigious university in Russia, Moscow State University, the same Soviet era professors maintain their positions in the Mechanical-Mathematics Department Selection Committee, as reported by former dissident and human rights activist Valery Senderov in 1996 to our Bureau in Moscow. This selection committee, even without instructions from KGB and Central Committee of CPSU, (I hope that now there are no such orders) tried in 1994 and 1995 to prevent Jewish talented young people to enter Moscow University. It is still almost impossible to enter the legal, physics, or mathematics departments of the Moscow State University, the Institute of International Relations, and many institutes of the military-industrial complex.

Later we will discuss so-called ideological anti-Semitism as part of inter-ethnic and inter-religious hatred, and how authorities use it as a key for justifying all Soviet and huma rights post-Soviet troubles in the political, social and economic crisis.

Here are several other examples of the anti-Semitism of officials. (Some apparatchik-bureaucrats are like weather-vanes, whose heads all the time turn with the direction of the current political wind). Mikhail Poltoranin, former Russian Minister of Information and Chair of the former Duma Committee of Information, said in his TV interview in 1994, that "in Russia the means of mass communication are published in 'camp Hebrew'", and that Russian journalists were guilty of "Russophobia, hatred of traditions, and lies". This statement was commonly understood to mean that too many Jews appeared in the Russian media - an echo of statements by Vladimir Zhirinovsky, among others - and that they used a clumsy Russian style to promote anti-Russian ideas. Poltoranin's successor Boris Mironov, also made a lot of anti-Semitic statements. For example, Mironov said, that the "Liberal newspapers *Izvestia, Moskovskie Novosty,* and *Segodnya* were of one nationality - Jewish" (*Amurskaya Pravda*, November 16, 1994). Last February, hearings about the fascist threat took place in the Russian State Duma. Around 70% of the speakers expressed pure and sharp fascist and anti-Semitic views. One Duma deputy from Zhirinovsky's party said to Alexander Lieberman, our Moscow Bureau Director, that Jews should be forcibly expelled from the FSU.

Two weeks ago four members of the Presidential Human Rights Commission resigned, in support of Chairman Sergei Kovalev who resigned earlier. Sergei Sirotkin, Deputy Chair of the Commission, cited one of the reasons for his resignation as the growth of ethnic and racial hatred, anti-Semitism and xenophobia, which he said were accepted at the highest government levels.

(news conference in Moscow on February 5, 1996, as reported in *The Washington Post*, 02/06/96). I am glad that you are hearing from him today.

In addition the judicial system is not independent in the FSU, so we can speak about anti-Semitism in the legal structures and organizations (the militia, court, prosecutor's office, KGB, Interior Ministry structures, jails, camps) as part of state anti-Semitism. There are some new tendencies in issues about anti-Semitism emanating from the Judicial system. Accusations against Jews and the creation of false criminal cases (Josef Koenov and Dmitrii Fattakhov in Uzbekistan, Semyon Lifshits in Russia, Alexander Volosov in Ukraine) often are connected with applications for emigration.

A second important point: The prosecutor's office tries not to use existing legislation to fight anti-Semitism. The militia and prosecutor's office attempt to define anti-Semitic cases as "hooliganism", which carries a much lighter sentence, instead of "inspiration of inter-ethnic or inter-religious hatred," (which could fall under Article 74 of the criminal code, and then under Article 72, which describes punishment for organization of these dangerous crimes.) Classifying these anti-Semitic crimes as "hooliganism" also masks the racial motivation and systemic bias involved. People have been murdered on the basis of anti-Jewish intentions (such as the Bogomolny family near Kemerovo, Siberia, in January, 1996), but the militia officially denied anti-Semitic components. It is for this reason that it is impossible to collect fully accurate data on anti-Semitic hate-crimes.

The prosecutor's office in particular is extremely inactive in using existing legislation to prosecute violent and hate-mongering publications and catch criminals. For example, Vladimir Bezverkhy, well known in St. Petersburg as "the grandfather of Russian Fascism," regularly published Fascist literature, including Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Bezverkhy was acquitted by a Petersburg court. Even after public protests, the Russian Supreme Court upheld the lower court decision.

In another example, the Moscow Jewish community accused an anti-Semitic editor Victor Korchagin of violating the criminal code by "inciting inter-ethnic violence." Korchagin published many provocative false anti-Semitic myths including *The Protocols of Zion Elders and The Catechism of the Soviet Jews*, D. Emelyanov book *De-Zionization*, V.Gladky's *Kikes*, Korchagin's own book *Russian Question* and others. After giant efforts of the Moscow Jewish community and Western grassroots organizations, Korchagin was sentenced by a Moscow court, but in an unbelievable irony was immediately pardoned in a presidential amnesty in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Victory over Fascism. Some other open Fascists were pardoned also in May of 1995. The courts, instead of prosecuting anti-Semitic publications, very often route such books as *Protocols of Zion Elders* to the scientific institutes or universities for "expert examining," although all the world (and even last Russian Tsar Nikolas II) knew that it was a fake document, written to provoke hatred of Jews.

If criminal cases are opened against anti-Semitic publications, it happens only under pressure from the grassroots but not at the initiative of the authorities. According to Kiev sociologist Leonid Finberg: "A dozen Ukrainian newspapers spread anti-Semitic propaganda. Some of them are openly Fascist ... their ideas are traditional: falsifying history, slapping on political labels, demanding an ethnocratic state (quoted in the UCSJ Bulletin *Monitor* of November, 1994). The majority of such fascist publications appear in Kiev and Lviv. The *Za Vilnu Ukrayinu* (For Free Ukraine) newspaper prints about a dozen anti-Semitic articles a month." But the authorities are not trying to protect Jews from these provocative materials and to start criminal cases. Protests of democratic and Jewish groups about the violence-inciting newspapers went largely unheeded by the Ukrainian authorities. An exception was the arrest of journalist Anatoly Scherbatiuk in 1994, who in an article in *Neskorena Natsia* # 7, incited readers to take up arms against ethnic minorities, first against Jews. But Scherbatiuk was released after protests of ultra-nationalistic members of the Parliament.

When newspapers are sanctioned, it is most often not for inciting inter-ethnic violence but instead for "insulting the President," especially in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The editor of the newspaper *Svobodnye Gory* (Free Mountains) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Luidmila Zholmukhamedova was recently deprived of her right to continue journalist activity for one year and a half by the city court not because of anti-Semitic articles which appeared in this newspaper approximately every week, but because of insulting President Askar Akaev (she accused him of buying villa in Switzerland). Aldan Ayambetov's anti-Semitic newspaper *Kazakhskaya Pravda* in Almaty, Kazakhstan, was temporary closed also because of insulting President Nursultan Nazarbayev, but not because this wild anti-Semitism.

We have hundreds similar examples of the real absence of legal protection for Jews against anti-Semitic and very dangerous propaganda and attacks. In Moscow the investigation to find the arsonists of Marina Rosha synagogue was started only after UCSJ's delegation visited and pressured Moscow Prosecutor Gennady Ponomarev in 1994. The chief rabbi of this synagogue was afraid to appeal to the Prosecutor's office because he received threats from city authorities that he would have serious trouble in rebuilding the synagogue if he attracted public attention to the arson.

Governmental anti-Semitism reveals itself in decisions about the transfer of state property. In spite of the law about returning of property confiscated by Communists to religious organizations, the local authorities as a rule have not returned confiscated property to the Jewish community, although they have to the Russian Orthodox Church. The Moscow Jewish Cultural Society (MEKPO) has struggled for the return of the Jewish Cultural Center on Lesnaya Street for five years, but has failed. In Azerbaijan, not one of 400 buildings of Jewish property was returned to the community, including the Baku synagogue where Theater of Songs is located now. The situation is the same all over the FSU (Orel, Kursk, Kostroma, Ekaterinburg, Almaty, Bishkek, Kiev, Lviv, and others).

Anti-Semitism by the government also exists in the form of creating bureaucratic barriers for emigration. The Interior Ministry created a series of obstacles in the process of receiving foreign passports necessary for emigration. State secrecy refuseniks still exist. (Our Moscow Bureau refusenik list contains more than 120 Jewish families, mostly in Russia and in Ukraine, and only few non-Jewish families, so the ratio is the same as it was before). The problems for the army of so-called "poor relatives" refuseniks have not been solved. (The official policy is that all citizens must receive written permission from their parents in order to emigrate. A divorced parent with a child under 18 must also receive permission from the ex-spouse and a document showing no financial obligations to the ex-spouse). A major step forward is that post-Soviet emigration laws in all republics declare that the court system should solve these technical emigration problems, but unfortunately there is no mechanism to work out financial problems. The Ministries of Justice in every post-Soviet state have no idea how in fact to judicially solve these problems, so they mainly do not accept such court cases. At the same time authorities do not want to sign the treaties with Western countries about the possibility to pay alimonies from and to abroad.

The State Custom and Passport Control Service routinely humiliates and mocks Jewish emigrants before departure to Israel and to the USA in the airports of Moscow, Petersburg, Tashkent, Kiev, Lviv, Odessa, Baku and many others. It has become very difficult now to sell personal property before emigrating, especially in Caucasian and Central Asian States, because the authorities create obstacles in official procedures and registration, and support efforts by other citizens to force Jews to abandon their property without a sale.

2. Ideological Anti-Semitism

The second main branch of anti-Semitism is ideological. Ideological anti-Semitism of the so-called patriotic, nationalistic, neo-Nazi, communist, chauvinistic, and extremist parties, movements and groups, is central to their fascist ideology and rhetoric. What is new is that parties and groups began now to express their anti-Semitic and xenophobic views more often and more strategically. The xenophobic fear of outsiders is reinforced now, because modern Russian policy and Russian public opinion mostly are based on ethnic identification of Russia with the Russian majority (the same for Ukrainians in Ukraine, the Kazakh people - in Kazakhstan, the Uzbeks - in Uzbekistan, etc).

There are hundreds of such extremist parties and groups all over the FSU, but mostly in Russia and the Ukraine. The most well-known are: the Liberal-Democratic Party (leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky), National-Republican Party (Nikolay Lysenko and Yuri Belyaev), Russian National Unity (Alexander Barkashov), Russian National Sobor (Alexander Sterligov), National-Bolshevik Party (Eduard Limonov), the Cossacks Brigades (recently President Boris Yeltsin established the Cossack Division under Kremlin Security Forces), National Salvation Front (Stanislav Terekhov),

Russian Communist Labor Party (Victor Anpilov, Victor Tulkin, Albert Makashev) and dozens others in Russia.

An example of the strength of anti-Semitic ideology of the Russian extremists is that Vladimir Zhirinovsky, a leading candidate for president of Russia, was quoted in a February 22 report from the InterFAX News Agency as calling for the deportation of Russian Jews.

Extremist parties exist in other republics as well. In Belorus, the Brotherhood of Slavs of Russia, the paramilitary Slavic Hawks and many others. In Ukraine, the Ukrainian National Assembly - Ukrainian Self Defence (UNA-UNSO), State Independence of Ukraine (DSU), Ukrainian National Conservative Party (UNCP) and around a HUNDRED the same in Ukraine. In Kazakhstan, the chauvinistic anti-Semitic Kazakh movements *Zhastar* and partly *Zholtaksan*. The program and publications of these parties and groups have openly anti-Semitic character. Ideas about "a world Zionist conspiracy" and "a Jewish occupation of all countries" are openly expressed in almost all their documents. Their lies about Jewish history and Jewish role in the life of other people are much richer and stronger than Dr. Goebbels' propaganda.

There is new (but traditional) tendency in the anti-Semitic views of some leaders. For example, Nikolai Lysenko, head of the extremist National-Republican Party, repeated the "theory" of the well known Russian politician and the member of the last Tsarist Duma Vasily Shulgin published in the Moscow magazine *Nash Sovremennik* (# 7, pp.150-158, 1993). The "theory" was that assimilated Jews presented the biggest threat for the Russian State and assimilated Jews should be thrown out of the country. But religious Jews, he continued, who follow a traditional lifestyle can stay in Russia, if they want, but they should to interfere in Russian political, social and even economic life.

Many of these extremist Russian parties also expressed extremely negative and hostile attitude to ethnic groups from Central Asia and the Caucasus. Likewise, the Ukrainian and Kazakh extremists express hostility to Russians. Inter-ethnic hatred takes many forms. But hatred to Jews has an absolutely wild character. The anti-Jewish statments of Zhironovsky are well known. The Russian Communists tried to be more careful in their pre-election anti-Semitic statements, but often they can not keep in silent their views. I share only one quotation from the new book of Gennady Zyuganov, the leading Presidential Candidate and head of the Communist Party. He writes in *I believe in Russia* (1995): "The influence of the Jewish diaspora on the outlook, culture and ideology of Westem society became more and more visible. Jews control over 50% of the stocks in the entire economy and the business activity of the Westem civilization... The Messianic claims of Jews are rooted deeper and deeper and are expressed sharper and sharper."

It is very interesting that very often these big politicians began to believe in such false anti-Semitic stories and myths. Some of the above-mentioned leaders (Zyuganov and Zhirinovsky) started the Presidential campaign carrying major anti-Semitic baggage. Anti-Semites of all kinds started

openly to demand information to determine what percentage of Jewish blood is in the bodies of Yavlinsky, Nemtsov and other Presidential candidates.

I have received a copy of the leaflet entitled *Geniuses of the Ruin* which was distributed on the 7th of November, 1995, at the Ukrainian Nationalist Party demonstration on the Independence square in Kharkov, Ukraine. This leaflet stated that all the Communist leaders before and after the Revolution and before the Second World War were Jewish, so the Jews were responsible for all the misfortunes that had happened in the USSR, and particularly Ukraine.

It is impossible to fully count the number of fascist leaflets, articles and books. According to the Moscow Anti-Fascist Center (MAFC), more than seven thousand articles are printed every week all over the FSU. Around 300 anti-Semitic Fascistic newspapers and magazines are published now in Russia, and part of them are transported to Ukraine and other countries, reported Evgeny Proschechkin, chair of the Center.

One of the other branches of ideological anti-Semitism is religious anti-Semitism, stimulated by some in the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia and Ukraine, and Moslem religious bodies in some Moslem Republics. Contrary to the Catholic Church, the Russian Orthodox Church did not repudiate charges that the Jews crucified Christ, which is a big and aggressive source of the anti-Semitism (more details are in Father Gleb Yakunin's brochure *The Real Face of the Moscow Patriarchy*, 1995). Unfortunately the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (in the USA, as well) and its representative in Russia Bishop Alexy Varnava support shameful anti-Semitism in the Moscow Patriarchy. In the post-Soviet Moslem countries (especially in Azerbaijan) the Hamas group and Islamic parties, supported by Iranian fundamentalists, are very active and organize activities against Jews and Israel. Given the current trend of young people returning to the churches and mosques, this traditional religious anti-Semitism becomes very dangerous. Several witnesses at a Helsinki Commission hearing in November 1995 identified a severe problem, particularly in Russia, where local authorities create obstacles for the religious practice of minority groups.

3. Street Anti-Semitism

The third major category is the so-called street or grass-roots anti-Semitism, which envelops the whole FSU. By this I mean anti-Semitic incidents and hate-crimes in the daily life of many Jews. The authorities and majority of the parties in general do not want to block this anti-Semitism and very often they stimulate it. But even when authorities are pushed to react to anti-Semitism, in the most cases they cannot prevent "daily life" anti-Semitism. Previously, during the totalitarian period, individual citizens were afraid to take bold steps because they feared state retaliation. Now, in the decentralization of state life, individuals are more able to take action (such as vandalizing a Jewish cemetery, torching a synagogue, or disrupting a Bar Mitzvah) and fear the response of the state less.

Anti-Semitism now is part of the criminalization of the whole society and whole life in the FSU. Many demonstrations, strikes, meetings and manifestations have an openly fascist and anti-Semitic character. For example, participants in one of the biggest demonstration devoted to the 50 year Anniversary of the Victory Day, on May 9, 1995, in Moscow, carried slogans like "Stop Zhido-Masonic Occupation of Russia", "Russia for Russians, Jews - Rush out from Government and Leave the Country."

Many Jewish apartments in Kiev, Tashkent, Sevastopol, Krasnodar, Rostov, Penza, Riga and others were burned and damaged. In 1995 alone we registered 112 incidents when swastikas were drawn on the walls of synagogues, Jewish houses and apartments. Many Jews frequently reported such incidents to our Moscow Bureau in 1995 including name-calling and insults such as "*zhid*" or "*kike*" in bread lines, on the buses, and in the metro.

Vandalism of Jewish cemeteries occurred so often, that people do not pay much attention to it (in 1995-1996 - in St.Petersburg several times; in Tbilisi, Rostov, Riga, Lviv, Kishinev, Tashkent, and others.) As a rule, the militia does not open a criminal case and does not try to find the offenders. Synagogues were under real gun and bomb attacks, or set fire in 1995-1996 about 25 times in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Rostov and other places.

Jewish people feel absolutely unprotected, and especially during their preparations for emigration. We know of many cases, but here I provide two examples. Our correspondent from Baku, Oleg Gelfand, reported that in December, 1995, one Jew was terribly beaten before emigration to the USA. His kidney was destroyed and he became disabled. The Chief Rabbi of Georgia Ariel Levine reported that three armed men burst into the Yakobashvili family's apartment in Tbilisi on the 10 of February, 1996. These men knew that the family was going to emigrate to Israel. They robbed the apartment, threatened and beat the Jewish family. The next day the Jewish Agency for Israel evacuated the family to Tel-Aviv.

The Soldiers Mothers' Committee in Moscow told me last December, that Jewish boys are terribly humiliated in the Army by officers and other soldiers, over and above the traditional *dedovshina* (hazing), on the basis of their religion and ethnicity. Most Jewish families believe that their sons' lives are at great risk if they are inducted into the army.

Hundreds of other examples of street anti-Semitism you can find in the UCSJ's *Monitor*, in the information of the American Association of Russian Jews and from other Jewish and human rights grass-root organizations.

Conclusion

Why are Jews in the FSU so frightened? Because they know that anti-Semitism has penetrated all organs of the society, that nobody inside the post-Soviet States will protect them against all kinds of anti-Semitism they have experienced every day. You never saw a Ukrainian or Kazakh or Russian President lead a demonstration against present day anti-Semitic barbaric destruction of cemeteries, as late French President Francois Mitterand did three years ago in Paris. You never heard that the Russian President apologized inside his country to Jews about anti-Semitism, as the Spanish King and Prime Minister did. Have you heard the statement about anti-Semitism that the Uzbekistan President made about the two false anti-Jewish criminal cases in Tashkent? Of course not, because the president never made the statement.

I was and I am still absolutely sure, that no open anti-Jewish pogroms have occurred in the FSU in the current time only because of monitoring and spotlighting attention to this problem from the Western governments, parliaments and grass-roots organizations. The outstanding record of the Helsinki Commision, which you also chair, Mr. Chairman, is well known and appreciated world-wide. Very important also is the consistent monitoring of the entire human rights situation which has been consistently been performed by the OSCE, the UN and the Council of Europe structures. The current events on the territory of the FSU definitely show that the transition period to free market economy and democracy, frankly speaking, has not yet begun. That's why one of the most important tasks now is to help small groups of real democrats in the post-Soviet states (especially in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan) to develop infrastructure of human rights groups and movements, support them in publishing democratic newspapers and magazines, in human rights education of the population through TV and Radio. We need to help in the process of bringing up people to respect religious, historic and cultural traditions of different ethnic and religious groups. We need to show the danger of anti-Semitism and other forms of xenophobia for the whole society's existence, not only for Jews. We should protect freedom of Jewish emigration from the FSU and keep the doors of Israel, the USA, Canada and other countries open wide for Jewish refugees. And, as before, it is hard to overestimate the leading role of the American Congress and Administration in above mentioned measures against anti-Semitism in the post-Soviet states.

Thank you again for providing me with the opportunity to address you on the continuing problems of anti-Semitism in the former Soviet Union.

Statement

of

Raisa Kagan (Pseudonym)

Victim of Anti-Semitism in Uzbekistan

on

Anti-Semitism in the Former Soviet Union (FSU)

before the

Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights
Committee on International Relations
United States House of Representatives

February 27, 1996

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for inviting me to testify before you on the subject of anti-Semitism in Uzbekistan. Today I will talk about my personal experiences, and the reasons Jews fear anti-Semitic persecution and harassment in Uzbekistan. Me and my family emigrated in the fall of 1995 as refugees and are very grateful for the protection of the United States.

In this testimony I am using the name Raisa Kagan, which is not my real name, to protect my family members still living in Uzbekistan. I have also changed some names that would identify me or family members.

I was born in Uzbekistan and worked at one company for 20 years, reaching the position of department head. For more than two years, me and my extended family were subjected to anti-Semitic harassment and persecution which escalated into violence that put our lives at risk.

In 1993, I was publicly ridiculed and taunted because of my nationality at my place of employment by Uzbek nationals. Heads of departments, the director of the company, senior deputies, and governmental representatives were present at a celebration on May 9th of the anniversary of the victory in World War II. Approximately 40 people attended the party, but I was the only Jew. Suddenly, one of the men who is known to be a member of the Uzbek detachment of Pamyat loudly announced that "it was impossible to sit at the same table with a dirty Jew." In response, I slapped his face. The man shoved me to the floor. During the incident none of the people in the room defended me. After I summoned the *militsia* several witnesses signed the official report. Although the "insult to national dignity" is punishable under Uzbek law and witnesses confirmed the details, the militsia refused to take action.

An intense campaign of hate took place during the summer of 1993, resulting in tremendous stress upon my family. No family member could walk outside the house at night because people were there to make anti-Semitic comments and harass us. My son Gennadii refused to leave the women unprotected in the house. The tension was enormous. Under this pressure, Gennadii and his wife separated and a few months later she left with their child for Siberia. The crusade against me and my family was understood to have been a contributing cause of the break-up of the marriage.

Soon thereafter, the barn and garage in the yard of our family's house were set on fire. Despite the anti-Semitic crusade against us, we assumed at that time that the fire was accidental. Subsequent events made us come to understand that the fire was the first sign of the acceleration of the campaign against us from verbal to physical attacks.

In the ensuing months, anti-Semitic slurs continued to be made against me at work and attempts were made to intimidate me into withdrawing the charges that I had filed. The Uzbeks responsible for the campaign against me repeatedly telephoned me at home or came to my office and demanded

that I retract my statement and cease all attempts to have them prosecuted for their actions. They called me a "dirty Jew" and said such things as, "It was a good time when Hitler burned Jews and hung them on the trees." They made menacing threats against me and my family, which were overheard by witnesses at my place of work.

I repeatedly requested protection for myself and my family from these attacks, but no official investigation was made and no steps were taken to safeguard my family.

In the spring of 1994, as my brother-in-law Oleg was approaching the family's house, he saw three Uzbeks standing near it. When he asked them what they were doing there, they attacked and beat him. As a result of the beating, Oleg's collar-bone and several of his fingers were fractured. Although the assault was reported to the police, no action was taken because Oleg was unable to describe the men. After the attack on Oleg no one in the family felt safe.

A month later, I received a telephone call at home telling me to go to the Jewish cemetery in the Domrabad district and look at my parents' graves. I hurriedly went there and was shocked to discover that the monuments over the graves of my mother, father and aunt had been destroyed.

A month after that, my family was awakened at 4:30 AM by the loud barking of a dog. We smelled smoke and when we investigated, we discovered that the door of the house was on fire. The yard smelled strongly of gas. It was obvious that the fire had been set deliberately.

On repeated occasions that summer, the young men in our family were summoned to the local military office. Without explanation Gennadii's military card was taken from him. Bearing that in mind, when my nephew Boris was called to the military office, he refused to surrender his own military card. Contrary to Uzbek law, Boris was detained at the military office for more than eight hours. Throughout the summer, he was summoned to the military office on a weekly basis. On each occasion, he was held for six to eight hours and was interrogated about his failure to "mention in time in the military documents that my mother was Jewish."

A few months later, Boris was driving his car when he was stopped by two militiamen and taken to the militia station. He was kept there until 3 AM and was released only when his cousin came and bribed the officials. Boris was sure that this latest provocation had occurred on direct instructions of the military office. He filed an official complaint with the procurator's office and demanded an investigation. Ten days thereafter, the procurator's office replied that there had been no infringement of the Uzbek criminal code.

Thereafter, my brother-in-law Oleg was summoned to the local housing committee [ZHEK] and interrogated about the ownership of the family home. He asked why the committee wanted documentary proof of ownership of the house, but they declined to answer him. Both the

harassment by the military office and the "coincidental" investigation by the housing authority were part of the campaign of persecution and violence against me and my family because we are Jewish.

In October, 1994, my son-in-law Arkadii was attacked by three men of local nationality as he was leaving our family's home. My daughter Raisa screamed for help, but by the time the others came, the men had beaten Arkadii, pierced the tires of his car and broken its windows.

At the same time, I was fired from my job because "only Uzbek nationals may head a department." This was done despite the fact that I had worked for 20 years and the company was always pleased with my work.

At the end of my presentation I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the persecution of my family is not just the harassment of one Jewish family. Thousands of Jewish families in Uzbekistan can report the same shameless, severe and terrible violations of their civil rights. If you are unfortunate enough to be a Jew you often feel that your dignity is trampled with cynicism. To be Jewish in Uzbekistan today means to be unprotected, rightless, and robbed. But the most terrible is to be humiliated until you feel like a nonentity.

Thank you for inviting me to speak here today.

Testimony of Tatyana Polanskaya
U.S. House of Representatives Subcommmittee on
International Operations and Human Rights
February 27, 1996

Mr. Chairman, Honored Members of the Committee:

I am very thankful to you for the honor of inviting me to this highly important hearing and giving me the opportunity to address the important issue.

My family emigrated to the United States one month ago. Therefore my impressions and my presentation on today's situation with Jews in Russia is fresh in my mind.

I would like to briefly inform you about my family and explain to you the reasons of our emigration, the reasons that brought us to such a serious choice.

I graduated from Law School in Moscow. My husband is a mechanical engineer and my son, 22, was a student at the Institute of Finance.

Our income satisfied us, we had an apartment and a car. We had enough money to spend on vacations, and I would say that our financial situation was stable.

Why did we decide to radically change our life, to meet new significant difficulties, to move to an absolutely lower social and financial strata?

There is only one answer, and the answer is anti-Semitism in Russia, total inability and unwillingness of the government to protect Jews from never-ending blatant and thinly veiled humiliations and persecution, permanent fear, each day and each minute, the real danger of being exposed to violence or persecution by virtue of being a Jew.

By this, I mean not only insults from people in the street, in stores, at work, in the metro. It means being absolutely unprotected from such assaults.

I was brought up in a country of anti-Semitism, surrounded by anti-Semitism, always knowing that me, my parents, our family are not the same as everybody else, that we are Jews, that each second, each day we have to struggle and prove our right to live decently, to study, to work, to be respected.

This of course taught me to be strong and brave. The same can be said about my son.

I would like to tell you briefly about my family's history.

After I passed the Moscow University Law School entrance exams, I was told at the entrance committee that Moscow University is considered the "Forge of *Russian* Personnel;" thus explaining that there was no place for Jews there, and that the unspoken quota of Jews allowed at the University had been already filled.

I was forced, as was my husband, to study at the evening institute, and I worked during the day.

Another example. While an official was hiring me, he took my passport where the nationality was shown and said, "Now write down your biography, place of birth, studies, baptism...." and then as if with as if with a friendly smile he added: "however, you kikes, are not being baptized."

I was refused that job and they explained to me that it had been given to another person. I knew that this was a lie. The next day I called there without identifying myself. I was told to come the next day and fill out the form. So the position was vacant.

My name does not sound Jewish and, therefore, with my education and experience I was often invited to apply to work at important state organizations. But all these invitations were canceled by the personnel department when they looked at my documents and found out I was Jewish.

During my whole life I never worked at a state organization. The clients of my law practice sometimes told me that they were using my services because they preferred to have a "sly kike" as an attorney rather than a Russian.

I can tell you of the act of arson which caused my parent's house to burn down, as were the houses of many other Jews who lived in that region.

I can tell you about the mysterious circumstances surrounding the brutal murder of my mother, who was also a Jewish lawyer. As usual, the authorities showed absolutely no interest in investigating the case.

These days, we often hear that everything has changed in Russia, that democracy and democratic government prohibit violation of human rights, that they protect Jews, and anti-Semitism does not exist, and that people emigrate for economic reasons. This view does not correspond to reality.

Even now, in Russia, Jews must have "nationality - JEW" written on their passports, job applications, birth certificates and school documents.

My son, at school, always had problems with his schoolmates and teachers because he was a Jew. He always had to defend his dignity with his fists because he did not want to hear insults concerning his nationality.

He was forced to leave his institute because of nationalism and anti-Semitism. Insults and beatings were so common that he found it intolerable. And when we brought the abuses to the attention of the administration of the institute, they pretended that nothing had happened.

Each day, when I came to my work, which is situated close to the American Embassy and very close to the Moscow White House, I saw anti-Semitic slogans, aggressive people with anti-Semitic signs with appeals to physically exterminate Jews. These people represent different anti-Semitic, pro-fascist organizations and parties, they openly propagate their activity and openly violate the rule of law.

But the Law does not function. It is not functioning because of the government's thinly veiled solidarity with those people.

Such extremist organizations as "Pamyat," "Chernaya Sotnya," openly propagate inter-ethnic hatred which is against the law. But the law is impotent and the officials don't do anything to discourage these activities. I would like to point out that their activity is not limited to propaganda. They are also creating armed militias to put force behind their hateful words.

The government knows about it, but doesn't do anything. All regulations and laws they create remain only on paper.

I often received in my mailbox anti-Semitic pamphlets and threatening letters. I complained to the militia, but in reply, I heard only laughter and explanations that my fears were silly.

Recently, the situation with Jews in Russia has become much worse and not better at all.

Economic and political instability, and everyday difficulties always lead to scapegoating.

The enemy number one in Russia is the Jew, the Jew, which should be blamed a'priori for everything: for the 1917 revolution, for perestroika, for setting international relations, for everyday troubles and for financial problems.

But worst of all is that the government in Russia is absolutely incapable of protecting Jews from the never-ending persecution and violence. They don't possess the mechanism for enforcing the laws which they already have, the laws which formally protect human rights. The laws are not functioning.

You know that in the recent elections to the State Duma, the communists gained one third of the votes. The whole pre-election campaign, all meetings in their support were full with anti-Semitic and pro-fascist ideas.

My family could not bear this situation any longer. I know that in the United States, I may also encounter incidents anti-Semitism. But I can be sure that my son and my family will be protected by the law. The law that functions and is not merely written. We know that our family will face formidable obstacles: our English language skills are minimal; we may suffer culture shock; we probably will not have the work we would like to have; financial limitations, etc. But we are ready to withstand that having the knowledge that for the first time in our lives, we will live as free people in a free country.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to the United States government, to HIAS, other Jewish public organizations for the great help they provide to Jews, to those who come from Russia in the process of the adaptation.

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, for your attention.

I am ready to answer your questions.

Testimony of Shahin Abkazian
U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on
International Operations and Human Rights

February 27, 1996

Mr. Chairman, honored members of the committee, I am thankful for the opportunity to testify before you concerning what happened to me, as a Jew, in Iran and, by extension, the general situation concerning Jews in that country. I must, however, first apologize to you for not being able to give you my name. Unfortunately, there are still people close to me in Iran who have not been able to leave. The Iranian authorities would not hesitate to seek revenge upon them if my identity were known and connected with this testimony.

My situation, while involving arrest, torture, and deprivation of human rights, was, of course not as bad as it is for some Jews. I , after all, got released from prison and, through bribes and luck, got myself and my immediate family out of Iran. As you undoubtedly know, however, Jews have been arrested and murdered in prison. Others have been arrested and then have simply disappeared.

Such extreme cases, thank goodness, have not been widespread. They do, however, happen with regularity. These atrocities, along with cases such as mine, serve to terrorize the Jewish community, keeping us all in a constant state of fear. In the last several years these extreme cases, coupled with much more widespread daily persecution of individual Jews, an intensification of the anti-Jewish propaganda campaign in the Iranian media, and a perceived increase in the efficiency and intensity of the surveillance of the Jewish community by the Iranian authorities, have all combined to raise the level of fear and anxiety among Jews.

Before going into my own situation, I would like to stress that what happened to me, while somewhat more extreme than what is happening in Iran to other members of my faith, could in fact happen to any Jew in Iran. I was held in prison as a spy, without charge, for over two years, tortured, and then ,when finally released, was under constant surveillance. All this happened to me simply because I was Jewish. I had no more contacts with Israel or the United States than any other Jew in Iran. I had no contacts with foreigners. There was no reason to believe that I was a spy, except for the general atmosphere of hate and suspicion generated by the government in Iran against Jews.

At the time of my arrest, I was working for a company where, for several years previous, I had been harassed, sent frequently on dangerous assignments, been pressed to convert to Islam, and had my salary reduced. Little by little, my Jewish co-workers were either fired or forced out of their jobs. Shortly before my arrest, my last Jewish co-worker was

summarily fired after twenty years of service, without pension benefits or severance. I would have left the country at that time, but because of the government connections of my job, getting a passport was out of the question. I attempted to get a passport for my wife and children, but at the special office for Jews at the Iranian passport service, we ran into constant delays. My wife was able to get a passport only much later, after my release from prison. It ultimately took my wife the better part of a decade to obtain a passport.

I was arrested at work, I was at first not allowed to contact my family. I was told that I was under suspicion of being a Zionist and a spy. There were no formal charges, no hearings, no trial. I was questioned for hours with blinding lights shining in my eyes. I was frequently hit in the face to encourage me to talk. Occasionally, I was kept for hours in a tiny cell where I could not stand up straight, lie down or sit. I was frequently threatened with execution. This treatment, although horrible, was not as bad as others have received at the hands of the Iranian authorities. I luckily suffered no permanent physical damage, as many Jews and others have.

After about two years of imprisonment, suddenly, with no explanation, I was released. I was warned, however, against any contact with the Jewish community, the synagogue, or foreigners. I was told not to leave Teheran. As I stated above, I was under constant surveillance. My phone was tapped and my mail was opened. My wife told me that during my imprisonment, our home had been subject to violent searches several times and that she had been roughly handled by the authorities. At school my daughter was questioned concerning my activities. I lived in constant terror.

Gentlemen, I return to the claim that what happened to me could, and does, happen to Jews to a greater or lesser extent every day in Iran. Our situation is really determined by two essential factors:

1. Jews have no protection by the Iranian courts. The police, for any serious issue, have to work with the Revolutionary Guards; therefore, they cannot seriously investigate crimes against Jews or claims filed by Jews against Muslims. Frequently, it is even dangerous for a Jew to file such a claim. Jewish property and business are routinely confiscated because a government official, or even an ordinary Muslim citizen, has decided to create a problem for a Jew. There is no hope that an Iranian court would find in favor of a Jew against a Muslim; and

2. In the past several years, the government sponsored antisemitic propaganda campaign has intensified. At the beginning of the Iranian revolution, Khomeini himself said that a distinction should be made between Jews and Zionists. Now,it is publicly said that every Jew is a Zionist. The antisemitic diatribes broadcast during the Friday sermons on television no longer just talk about the Israelis or the Zionists. They talk about the Jews in general, about the worldwide Jewish plot, and how the Jews in Iran are all agents of this plot. This propaganda is not only limited to sermons. There are also hateful and comical Jewish characters in family radio programs, frequent newspaper articles, and so forth.

It was this suspicion and hatred of Jews in general, stirred up by the government, that caused my imprisonment. I was probably denounced by a fanatic co-worker, and it was simply assumed that the accusation was valid because of this general atmosphere of hatred. I can see no other reason for it.

This anti-Jewish propaganda has become even more intense as the Arab-Israeli peace process is gaining momentum. The Iranian government seems to want its own Jewish population to suffer for the progress made in this regard. This increase in antisemitic activity is also related to the degenerating economic situation, where the Jews are being blamed for the destruction of Iran.

The Jewish community is being gradually excluded from any possibility of further existence in Iran. Jews having jobs or businesses live in constant fear of being forced to convert or of losing their jobs or livelihood. After I was released from prison, there was no possibility for me to work, since it was forbidden for any company having government contracts to hire Jews. In a country like Iran, almost every major company involved in industry depends on government contracts. It is now also almost impossible for Jews to obtain trade or import licenses. Religion must be stated on all job applications, and now most employers will not hire Jews. Even if they have no antisemitic feelings themselves, they are afraid of the results of having a Jewish employee.

Established Jews are forced to survive through bribes, allowing themselves to be regularly victimized. They still, however, are helpless when it comes to their children. Jewish children are regularly abused in school. They must take part in anti-Israel and anti-USA demonstrations. Jewish children are given the lowest priority in being admitted to public schools, and are frequently forced to attend school far away from their homes on the pretext that the schools in their district are full. The children have limited educational possibilities and almost no job possibilities.

Given this hopeless situation, you could well ask why the 25,000 Jews still in Iran don't all leave. First, it is difficult for Jews to obtain passports in Iran. A Muslim receives a passport within 24 hours, but there is a special passport office for Jews, where Jews are presented with very many forms and delaying tactics. In addition, frequently, members of a family must surrender their passports to assure that others will return, or only a part of a family is given a passport in the first place.

If a Jew does manage to leave, he is practically forced to abandon his material goods. If he sells his property to a Muslim, he will receive only a fraction of its value. And even that little amount is impossible to take out of the country. Moreover, if the government learns that the property is being sold for the purpose of emigration, there is a danger of its being confiscated. If the property is given over to Jewish relatives or friends, it will eventually be

confiscated, and the friends and relatives placed on the black list, prohibiting them from traveling abroad, even if they have a passport. Therefore, there is almost no choice for a Jew but to abandon the property to government confiscation.

Gentlemen, I have tried to paint an accurate picture of what happened to me in Iran and the difficult situation of the Jewish people in that country. My testimony is based upon either what happened to me directly or what I saw happening to other Jews. I have avoided giving any information obtained by hearsay, not only because I feel it out of place in such a context, but also because I was, frankly, not in a position to hear very much. For my last several years in Iran, I was either in prison or under such close surveillance that I did not dare to even discuss these issues with people where were not very close to me. There are, therefore, areas of life in which Jews are persecuted that I learned about only after I left that country, since through my specific situation, these problems did not touch me in Iran. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.

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Submission by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society

to the

Subcommittee of International Operations and Human Rights
of the
Committee on International Relations
U.S. House of Representatives

HEARINGS ON THE CONDITION OF JEWS AROUND THE WORLD

Norman D. Tilles
President

Martin A. Wenick
Executive Vice President

February 27, 1996

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of this Subcommittee, the Hebrew Immigrant Society (HIAS) is the international migration agency of the American Jewish community. Since its founding in 1880, HIAS has assisted in the resettlement of over four million Jewish and non-Jewish refugees from all over the world in the United States and elsewhere. In recent years, this agency's efforts have been focused upon helping Soviet Jewish refugees escape persecution and reunite with family members here in this country.

HIAS also strongly supports the extension of the Lautenberg Amendment for an additional year which, since November 1990, has facilitated the granting of refugee status to Soviet Jews and certain other designated groups.

Country Conditions in the Former Soviet Union

It is our view, and the view of the organized American Jewish community, that despite the professed desire of Russian President Boris Yeltsin and his counterparts to establish free and democratic societies in the successor states which protect the rights of all individuals, the Jewish population there, numbering more than 1.5 million, remains a community at serious risk. This testimony will focus upon a series of inter-related factors which are key to understanding this risk; in brief: (1) the historical context for Jewish vulnerability in the former Soviet Union; (2) the impact of current economic and political instability; (3) the impact of intensified inter-ethnic conflicts and increased nationalism; and

(4) current manifestations of anti-Semitism.

These factors, taken together, are the foundation for our continuing concerns about the Jewish community remaining in the successor states. It is for this reason that we also support a continued refugee program for Jews from the former Soviet Union.

Historical Background

It is important, as always, to begin with the historical experience of Jews in the former Soviet Union, for it is through that prism that the Jewish population views itself, and others view them. The deeply rooted beliefs that prompted the persecution and killing of Jews in Tsarist Russia, the pogroms in the Soviet Ukraine between 1917-1921 which left over 150,000 Jews dead, and the virulently anti-Semitic campaigns of the Stalinist and Khrushchev eras, are not as easily swept aside as political leaders and institutions, and persist whether officially sanctioned or not.

For over three hundred years, the Jewish population in the former Soviet Union/Russian Empire has been seen as the "other," or the scapegoat, at both the governmental and grassroots level--particularly in times of political, economic and social upheaval. It is that historical reality which serves as a palpable reminder to Jews of their tenuous and vulnerable position in the embryonic Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

While the official policy of tolerance and conciliation toward Jews and other religious minorities in the former Soviet Union, which was initiated during Gorbachev's era of glasnost and

perestroika and is continuing under the current leadership of the Commonwealth States, is welcomed by the Jewish population, it does not address the fear engendered by the historical predilection of the populace at large to point its finger at the Jew in times of trouble. We welcome the commitment of some authorities to return Jewish communal properties and to permit the functioning of Jewish communal institutions.

At the same time, of particular concern is the proliferation in the last few years of a specifically grassroots anti-Semitism (which I will refer to in greater detail in a subsequent section), and the decentralization of power which has accompanied the demise of the Soviet state and rendered limited at best the ability of government authorities in the successor states to protect Jews from this type of persecution.

Impact of Current Economic and Political Instabilities

The efforts of Russian President Yeltsin and his CIS counterparts to traverse the perilous road to a free market economy have met with resistance and resentment from remnants of the old guard Communist bureaucracy, still in positions of influence and authority, as well as from the general populace, which must suffer the grim practical consequences of radical economic reform. With the destabilization of the ruble and removal of price controls, prices of goods and services have spiralled upward, far outstripping the limited capacity of the average family's meager monthly salary. At the same time, job stability is diminishing and

large scale unemployment is anticipated.

This economic freefall has exacerbated social discontent and friction, particularly with regard to perceptions of "haves" and "have-nots" within society at large. This has had a significant impact upon the Jewish population, which throughout the last three centuries in Russia have been accused of formulating diabolical plans to rob the masses of their money and possessions, or at the very least, benefitting at the expense of others.

The current economic situation has, in fact, created great problems for Jews seeking to emigrate. The rapid escalation in prices within the former Soviet Union has made the emigration process to the U.S. and elsewhere exceedingly expensive, because of the need for Jewish families from all over the country to make a number of trips to Moscow to complete refugee processing steps required by U.S. authorities. The cost of this internal travel, taking into account tickets and food, travel and lodging while in Moscow, often amounts to more than a half year's salary, causing great hardship for families who often must delay their departure until they are able to come up with the necessary financial resources. This does not take into consideration the funds needed to pay bribes to local emigration and customs officials, the magnitude of which is increasing virtually on a daily basis.

The recent parliamentary elections have been most disturbing and indicate the polarization in Russia is continuing, with a great danger for minorities in that country, and with serious implications for the other successor states. Gennady Zyuganov's

Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) has shocked the West and some Russian observers by winning a substantial portion of the popular vote in the parliamentary election; and the ultranationalist party of Vladimir Zhirinovsky did significantly better than virtually all observers expected. (In recent days, Zhirinovsky is reported to have hailed the victory of Patrick Buchanan in the New Hampshire Presidential primary and expressed to him in a message that they could cooperate to "deport" U.S. and Russian Jews.)

The KPRF calls itself the heir to the party of prominent worker Aleksei Stakhanov, astronaut Yuri Gagarin, and Marshal Georgi Zhukov, the World War II hero. It is not the party of Lenin, Stalin, Brezhnev, or Gorbachev. The KPRF sides with ordinary party members. They often remind their constituents that the KPRF was born inside the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) at the initiative of the people.

The democrats and radical nationalists, on the other hand, have failed to find the appropriate message to give hope to the demoralized post-Soviet citizen. Zyuganov's neo-communist interpretation of Soviet identity offered a simple solution for the ordinary Russian man: he could escape traditional communist ideology while at the same time retain a sense of dignity from Russian history.

With the Communist party reborn, with a militant Vladimir Zhirinovsky flirting with fascism as a serious Presidential candidate, and with Boris Yeltsin weakened both physically and

language, culture and religious traditions for specific ethnic groups. Yet, all too often, as we are now seeing in certain areas of Central and Eastern Europe, nationalism can be a destructive force, reviving ethnic hatred and racial persecution, and suppressing any efforts to forge a new tradition of tolerance and democratic pluralism. It is with this perspective that we watch cautiously the creation of nationalist movements across the former Soviet Union, noting in particular that the birth of six independent Muslim states, with the potential for the growth of Islamic fundamentalism, has serious implications for the more than 200,000 Jews who live in Central Asia and Azerbaijan.

Present-Day Manifestations of Anti-Semitism

The economic and political instabilities, inter-ethnic conflicts and rise in nationalism detailed above have served as the breeding ground, in essence, for increased manifestations of anti-Semitism over the past year in the former Soviet Union. As I have already mentioned, this anti-Semitism can most often be characterized as grassroots, or "street" anti-Semitism, for it is generally the case that the leaders of the Commonwealth states, as they seek to join the world community, have seen the importance of condemning all forms of discrimination and persecution against individuals and/or groups. However, it is important to note that official statements condemning anti-Semitism are not, in practice, guarantees that the Jewish population is protected. A Senate Staff Report of the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Affairs of

February 5, 1992, concluded:

> [W]hile the top leadership of the former Soviet Union took steps to denounce anti-Semitism, neither the past nor the current leadership has succeeded in stopping the activities of anti-Semitic organizations. Local authorities, which are gaining in power, have done little to oppose anti-Semitism."

While there is little evidence of an organized pattern of violence against the Jewish population, numerous individual acts of an overtly anti-Semitic character have been or are being carried out on an increasingly frequent basis throughout the Commonwealth. These acts include the desecrations of Jewish cemeteries, the defacing of Jewish institutional establishments, and the publication of blatantly anti-Semitic material on a regular basis. Additionally, Jews on a daily basis are "treated" to outbursts of an anti-Semitic nature as they conduct the routine of their lives on the streets of the former Soviet Union.

I am appending a recent survey taken from refugees coming from the Former Soviet Union to the United States (Tab A). Their comments are very disturbing.

Conclusion

In sum, at this point there is tremendous instability, uncertainty and danger in the former Soviet Union. We cannot afford to let the groups who have traditionally felt the anger of that society to once more be left helpless. Protection that the

AZERBAIJAN

Baku

• Refugees reported that the Islamic Party of Azerbaijan routinely disseminates anti-Semitic messages through a variety of vehicles, such as their newspapers, leaflets, and radio channel. "Throw the Jews out" and "Jews should go where they belong or be destroyed" often are heard. A daily two hour television program broadcast directly from Iran also encourages listeners and believers of Islam "to get rid of the Zionists; Jews are our enemy."

• Arriving refugees recounted seeing leaflets distributed by a nationalist group called "Musavat" that urged "Kick the Jews Out," and "Don't buy apartments from Jews, they belong to you."

• It also was related that emigrating Jews often are the target of militia who extort bribes from them. Their departures frequently are impeded if they do not comply.

BELARUS

Babruysk

• "We'd rather have people from the Caucasus than Zhidy (Kikes)", was cited in many instances. Accounts of frequent harassment of Jewish children were heard, solely because they are not Slavs.

Brest

• A local newspaper, "Sem Dney," printed anti-Semitic statements such as "Jews ruined the economy of Belarus."

Gomel

• Refugees indicated that they were shocked by remarks the President of Belarus made in an interview with a German newspaper in November. (President Lukashenko stated: "Not all of Hitler's actions were bad; one can learn from him methods of governing a country. The history of Germany resembles that of Belarus to some extent. Germany arose from ruin thanks to a strong regime. Not everything bad in Germany is connected with Hitler....."). Refugees also were outraged that Lukashenko did not apologize for his remarks, but, in fact, defended them.

• Also reported was that the Belarus People's Front, a nationalist political group, distributes leaflets indicating that "all troubles are the fault of the Jews."

Vitebsk

• Jewish refugees told of receiving threatening telephone calls at their homes warning them to leave Belarus or they would be killed. Extremist newspapers such as "Sokol" (Eagle) and "Narodnoye Slovo" (People's Word) often print anti-Semitic articles and threaten Jews with pogroms.

GEORGIA

Tbilisi

• While the President of Georgia officially has opposed acts of anti-Semitism, "street anti-Semitism" persists. Refugees reported frequent desecration of the Jewish cemetery and that a Georgian newspaper, "Iberia Spektr," wrote that "Georgia is only for Georgians, not Jews, Armenians, or Russians."

• Deteriorating local conditions such as shortages of gas, water, and other basics, have contributed to a significant increase in racketeering, with Jews planning to emigrate often the victims. Reports of members of emigrating families kidnapped for ransom also were heard.

MOLDOVA

Kishinev

• A refugee family recounted having received numerous telephone calls from unidentified individuals threatening, "If you don't leave you will be killed." Another family stated that their young children were called "Zhidy" in school and that Moldovan children refused to sit next to them.

• It also was reported that the Jewish cemetery had been desecrated with numerous gravestones painted with swastikas and others that traditionally display pictures of the deceased had the eyes forcefully marred.

• The ultra-nationalist People's Front of Moldova was reported to distribute leaflets that assert "There is no place for Jews in Moldova".

RUSSIA

Bryansk

• Leaflets distributed throughout the city by the LDPR (Liberal Democratic Party of Russia), headed by Vladimir Zhirinovsky, had statements such as "Russia is for Russians, not for Zhidy." Also, threats such as "When our President Wolfovich (Zhirinovsky) is President of Russia, we will get rid of you, Jews" were reported to have been heard at LDPR meetings.

who called themselves the "Organization of Patriotic Ukrainians" issued a statement blaming the Jews for causing the problem because they wanted to gain control over the city's sewage system.)

• A local fascist newspaper, "Novyy Den" (New Day), was cited to excerpt from "Mein Kampf" and threaten that "all Zhidy have to be killed." Further, the UNSO (Ukrainian National Salvation Organization), a well known ultra-nationalist anti-Semitic group, reportedly holds para military training sessions for children in Kharkov and distributes anti-Semitic literature in the city.

Khmelnitsky

• It was reported that "Kill Zhidy, save Ukraine" was painted on the walls of the Jewish Center. The Jewish cemetery is repeatedly desecrated.

Odessa

• "If there is no water in the city, it is because the Jews drank it all." A common refrain heard not only in Odessa, but recounted by many Jews from other cities in the NIS.

• A magazine that is distributed widely throughout Ukraine, "Vilna Ukraina" (Free Ukraine), prints anti-Semitic articles often accusing the Jews as the source of all the problems in Ukraine.

Yevpatoriya (Crimea)

• A Jewish family who arrived from Crimea described having been approached by members of the UNSO and warned to get out of Ukraine as "there is nothing left for Zhidy here." Jewish cemeteries in other cities of Crimea were reported to have been desecrated.

UZBEKISTAN

Bukhara, Tashkent, Samarkand

• Refugees from Uzbekistan spoke with concern about the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. Numerous physical attacks and anti-Semitic remarks frequently are directed at Jewish children and adults. Jewish youngsters also have been victimized by their peers in school and on the street to the extent that some parents were afraid to allow them outside. One child was seriously attacked by a group of Uzbek children while the police stood nearby and did nothing.

• Many families spoke of the growing number of physical attacks on Jews who are known to be emigrating. Some received threats that they should leave or else face being killed. Others complained that they were forced to work on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays.

• Stories were heard of Jews denied admission to certain university courses because space was needed for Uzbek students.

NUMBER OF REFUGEES INTERVIEWED*
JULY 1995 – DECEMBER 1995

COUNTRY	CASES	INDIVIDUALS
AZERBAIJAN	33	119
BAKU	33	119
BELARUS	21	66
GOMEL	13	35
OTHER	8	31
GEORGIA	9	29
TBILISI	9	29
KAZAKHSTAN	10	41
ALMA-ATA	10	41
MOLDOVA	21	70
KISHINEV	18	59
OTHER	3	11
RUSSIA	101	286
MOSCOW	50	127
OTHER	13	39
TAJIKISTAN	6	15
DUSHANBE	6	15
TURKMENISTAN	2	3
ASHKHABAD	2	3
UKRAINE	148	405
KHARKOV	28	63
ODESSA	43	120
OTHER	77	223
UZBEKISTAN	116	474
TASHKENT	49	180
OTHER	69	294
GRAND TOTAL	469	1509

*NUMBERS REPRESENT REFUGEES INTERVIEWED,
NOT THE TOTAL NUMBER OF REFUGEE ARRIVALS.

Exit Permission Procedures: Jews are still the only citizens of Syria who must first request permission from the secret police to travel. Huge sums and/or valued goods must be paid as bribes at each step of the process and applicants endure threats and other forms of harassment in order to obtain exit permission and passports. For Jews living in Allepo, as many as 8-10 trips to the Mukhabarat in Damascus may be required to obtain travel documents.

Sale of Property: Jews have never been able to buy or sell property or personal belongings without the permission of the authorities. This has not changed in spite of indications that Jews would enjoy the same rights as others. Jews are forced to leave homes, businesses, and personal valuables unsold or face severe consequences from the police. Any attempts to sell property or goods illegally could be met with severe reprisal and suspicion of emigration. Jews departing Damascus for "travel" have their bags thoroughly searched (strictly limited to two per person) as well as humiliating body searches. Police have been known to force individuals to relinquish cash at the airport under accusation that it was obtained by the illegal sale of goods. At the present time, Jews departing Syria are permitted to leave with approximately $2000.00.

Threats/Historical Context: On receipt of exit permission and passports, most Jews continue to receive stern warnings and threats from the secret police. They are admonished that should they go to Israel or not return to Syria, their family members who remain behind will be harmed, tortured, or possibly executed. Strict instructions are given not to divulge any information about Syria, payment of bribes, or even speaking with anyone connected to Israel.

There is legitimate basis for Jews to fear the threats of the Mukhabarat. In the past, Jews have been executed for attempting to escape Syria. Also, on two separate occasions in the 1950's, Jews remember the brief lifting of the ban on travel only to have the doors shut suddenly. Even those who assisted with departures during this brief period were executed. In sum, the history of Syria's Jewish community, which earlier this year was estimated to number between 3,500 and 4,000, has been one of persecution, repression, and denial of internationally accepted norms of human rights as Syria has carried out a policy of aggressive hostility to Israel and has tried to utilize the community as a pawn in seeking to achieve its objective.

JEWISH POPULATION OF IRAN

DECEMBER 1993

1. Patterns and Trends: All informants in a recent survey of the HIAS Iranian Jewish refugee caseload in Vienna agree that the situation for Jews had deteriorated in Iran since the end of the Iran- Iraq war. The consensus seems to be that after the end of the war, the government has had more time and energy to focus on anti minority, and especially anti Jewish, action, and that stirring up anti minority feeling has been used to fill the internal political function previously filled by anti Iraq propaganda.

It might be objected that since the resource pool of informants was composed of all recent refugees from Iran, their claim of a recent deterioration of the situation for Jews in Iran might reflect only their own personal situation, or be used to justify their own flight. Such objections, however, can be answered by the large proportion of the informants who began

terrorizing the Jewish community.

4. The Jewish representative in the Iranian Parliament: The informants all agreed that no matter who the Jewish Majles representative is, he is essentially a tool of the government to manipulate the Jewish community more than being a representative of the Jewish community in the government. The current representative, Mr. Keyvani, has pressured synagogues to give 45% of their budget to Islamic causes, including the Hesbollah in Lebanon. He also has pressured the Jewish community to take part in the anti Israel Jerusalem Day demonstrations. It was agreed by all the informants that Mr. Keyvani had no choice but to do this.

5. Iranian Jewish community, size and distribution: Since the Iranian Revolution, more than three quarters of the Iranian Jewish community has already left the country. Before the Revolution, the community numbered approximately 100,000. Now it is said to number less than 25,000. The community was largely middle and upper middle class, and lived materially quite well in Iran. The large percentage of people who have already left, and their unquestionably better material circumstances in Iran than that which they generally enjoy in their countries of resettlement, is also a clear indication that their reason for leaving their homes was because they no longer felt safe there.

It is generally agreed that at least up to now, the situation for the Jews was worse in the smaller cities, such as Shiraz and Isfahan than in Teheran. This difference was caused not only by the more fanatic Muslim environment in the provincial centers, but also because the Jews were more easily identifiable in the smaller cities. This advantage of relative anonymity that the Teherani Jews have enjoyed up to now will probably change, with the advent of the new identity cards and business licenses, where the carrier's religion is noted.

Jews are not allowed to live in religious centers such as Qum and Mashad. Jews living in Mashad before the revolution have been expelled.

That fewer Iranian Jews have left the country in recent months should not be interpreted as an indication of an improvement in their situation. The wealthier segment of the community has already left, and what remains is largely the people for whom the $6,000 to $10,000 per person it usually costs to bribe oneself out of the country and depart is not easy for those who remain to come by. Because of the high cost of the dollar on the black market, these sums represent extremely high amounts in terms of an Iranian Jew's earnings.

It is still very difficult to obtain a passport, frequently requiring considerable bribes and long delays. Moreover, if the authorities suspect that a Jew is selling his property in order

to emigrate, it is immediately confiscated. In addition, when the Jewish community was larger and there were still a number of Jews who hoped to be able to remain in Iran, Jews could sell their property to Jews. Now they must try to sell to Muslims to raise the money to leave, which is very dangerous. Also, there is a concerted government campaign to discourage Muslims from either selling to Jews or buying Jewish property. In March of 1991 (date approximate), there appeared an article in the newspaper "Islamic Republic", which is owned by Ali Khamenei, encouraging Muslims to refuse to buy from Jews. According to the informants, such articles and efforts have been effective.

6.Identification: Jews are identifiable both through their physical features and, in many cases, through their accent in Farsi. Recently, religion has begun to be stamped on all new identity papers. This, of course, has made the Jewish community very worried.

Formerly, only business licenses involving food businesses or businesses involved with bodily contact, such as hairdressers had to identify the owner of the shop as a non Muslim, but now all new business licenses carry such designation, as do all renewals. According to the informants, this means that Jewish businesses will not be able to survive. As such a designation effectively destroyed Jewish owned barber shops, (Jews were never allowed even to apply for licenses for food shops.) the extension of the law to all other businesses will destroy them also. Approximately 60% of the potential clientele will not buy from a business identified as Jewish.

Informants report that although businesses of all non Muslims must be identified as such to the public, this regulation has effected Jews more negatively than other non Muslim minorities. Christians, in contrast to Jews, were always allowed to have food shops and restaurants, and identification as such does not seem to have damaged their business. Informants were at a loss to explain why Muslims would buy from Christians, who are also considered unclean, and not from Jews and why Christians are allowed to engage in food businesses, and Jews are not. All informants, however, insisted that the extended regulations, requiring identification of Jewish ownership, would seriously hamper Jewish business.

All application forms, including those for work, schools, renting an apartment, mortgages and bank loans, require statement of religion. When a Jew receives a passport, it is stamped that the bearer may leave the country only through Teheran airport, thereby identifying the bearer as a Jew.

7. Education: The implications of "Jewish schools being under the authority of the ministry of education" is that, contrary to what is stated in the U.S.Department of State Human Rights report on

During the Iran- Iraq War, Jewish young men were generally not drafted into military service, since their loyalty was in question. Currently, Jews are drafted, but most choose to buy their way free of service, which is officially permitted. Those who have not and have in fact served all report severe harassment and violent acts against their person. Several have reported having been sent to hazardous, life threatening duty, such as working in mine fields, which normally is reserved only for soldiers under severe punishment or criminals.

None of the informants were aware of cases in which Jews received their property back under privatization schemes. However, it was said that such privatization schemes involved, for the most part, large industries, which were not in Jewish hands before the revolution. Jews owned generally small and middle sized businesses, which were confiscated in relation to their owner's being Jewish (suspicion of emigration, Zionism, as part of obtaining release from detention, etc, and not as part of normal nationalization).

Jewish courts (beth din) do exist in Iran, as they always have, even in Europe during the Holocaust. They are purely a private, internal Jewish matter, with no legal, only moral authority.

9. Anti- semitic literature: In the past few years the incidence of anti Jewish articles, and the seriousness of these articles, has increased. These have appeared not only in the hard line newspapers, but also in the mainstream press. Most notable was an article in Iran's largest newspaper, "Keyhan" appearing two days before Passover of 1992, on the second page, giving vent to the medieval "blood libel" against the Jews, that the Jews used Muslim blood in the preparation of the matzoth, the unleavened bread prescribed for the Passover celebration. This article stirred up a great deal of overt hostility towards Jews. Even Jews in the professional class report having to show matzoth to their educated, professional Muslim colleagues to prove that there was no trace of red color.

The Jewish community wrote a rebuttal to this article, which was printed only two weeks later, after intervention by the president of Parliament and the Jewish representative. The rebuttal was printed, however, in a minor edition in an inconspicuous place. It was felt by some informants that the rebuttal was printed only because the original article had produced "overkill" and the situation among fanatic Muslims had become dangerous.

The predictable, hard line sources, have also, of course, produced very damaging anti- semitic material. I have already mentioned an important article in the newspaper owned by Ali Khameni, "Islamic Republic" urging Muslims to refrain from all

commercial activity with Jews (Spring 1991). And, as said, whether through the influence of this article, or through other governmental urging, Muslims are increasingly reluctant to buy from or sell to Jews.

Also notable is a series of anti Jewish postage stamps released a few years ago and still in circulation. These stamps, printed to celebrate the international year of the child, show a child throwing a stone at a synagogue window, displaying a large star of David. It is very clear that these postage stamps are not anti Israel; they are anti Jewish.

In Shiraz one of the leading Muslim clerics of the city, Mr. Ha'eri, delivers almost weekly anti Jewish diatribes at television Friday prayer services. These diatribes are very clearly not just anti Israel. Mr.Ha'eri has frequently emphasized that to him all Jews are equally dangerous, whether they are in Israel, or America, or Iran.

10. Foreign policy complications: Our informants were unable to give any reliable information on this issue.

11. Persian cultural tolerance: Persian cultural tolerance has, in fact, been destroyed by the Islamic Revolution. The concerted governmental campaign against Israel, and, both independently and by association, against Iranian Jewry, has suffocated any remnant of such tolerance. How can a society be tolerant to minorities when the fact of belonging to a minority is constantly emphasised (on identity cards, business licenses, applications forms even for the most insignificant functions)?

The informants have all stated that there were many very tolerant Iranian Muslims. They feel, however, that most of them have either left the country or are have been afraid to express their tolerance because of the general atmosphere.

12. Travel, rights of return, and general communications: In Teheran, Jews wishing to obtain a passport must be interrogated at a special office for Jews at the security section. The security section must also approve applications from Muslims, but this is done by computer, without an interrogation, and is generally accomplished within 24 hours. Jews have to wait a minimum of three months, frequently very much longer. In many cases, a member of the family has to remain in Iran to guarantee that the others return. Absolute refusals of passports are frequent. Bribes are also often necessary.

The situation in Shiraz is even more difficult and arbitrary. In addition to those obstacles obtaining in Teheran, Shirazi Jews applying for passports must supply receipts for payment of taxes from an inordinate number of government offices. This is not necessary for Muslims.

There are those in our country who would extinguish the lamp on the Statue of Liberty and close our "golden gate," turning away the "huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

We cannot afford to sink into the xenophobia and nativism those shrill voices are preaching. We must remain a light unto the nations and the leader in the struggle to protect human rights and help the oppressed.

Tragically, Mr. Chairman, our report on anti-Semitism reaffirms your contention that "there is literally nowhere in the world where Jews are safe from hatred and violence."

The voice of hate is amplified when backed by the arsenals and treasuries of pariah states like Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Sudan and their ilk.

But even democratic states are not immune. In Germany, according to our study, police counted 1,147 anti-Semitic incidents, nearly double those in the prior year. And those are just the ones that are reported. In the United States, with the largest concentration of Jews anywhere, anti-Semitic incidents increased by 10% to 2,066. Britain remained the most violent country regarding anti-Semitic and racist attacks, with nearly 50 incidents.

We have seen violent attacks on Jewish humanitarian, charitable, educational and religious centers in England, Argentina, German, Belgium and Australia.

Japan, which has virtually no Jewish population and never has, nonetheless has emerged as a large purveyor of and market for anti-Semitic material in the industrialized world. In the last decade, millions of books, articles, pamphlets, audio tapes and video cassettes have been sold in Japan.

Hate that is spread by the spoken word, the printed page, the scrawled graffiti and the hand of violence. None can be tolerated. We as Jews may be the most direct and apparent victims, but Mr. Chairman, all free people are the victims. None of us can afford to be silent.

I commend you and this subcommittee for shining the public spotlight on this scourge, and I appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony for your record.

I ask that the WJC/ADL report *Anti-Semitism Worldwide* be included in the record of this hearing.

Thank you.

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February 27, 1996

The Honorable Chris Smith
Chairman
Subcommittee on International Operations
and Human Rights
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We are all too aware that popular anti-Semitism has not abated, and has even percolated to the surface in countries where it had been previously suppressed. The image of the Jew as a subversive element aimed at "world domination" is part of the world view of many of the racist and extremist movements threatening democracy around the world today.

As governments seek to constrain the dissemination of anti-Semitic material, techniques for distribution are improving in sophistication and coordination among extremist groups is extensive through vehicles like the internet.

We commend to your attention, the attached ADL reports: *Hate Group Recruitment on the Internet*, *The Skinhead International*, and the *Anti-Semitism World Survey* which document these trends on a country-by-country basis.

Today's hearing underscores that we all have a stake in fighting against bigotry and sends a message to potential targets and would-be perpetrators that the U.S. will not tolerate anti-Semitism and religious persecution.

Sincerely,

David H. Strassler
National Chairman

Abraham H. Foxman
National Director

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